

# COUNTRY LIFE

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Our Portrait Illustration</i> • Mrs. Monro Walker ... ..	613, 614
<i>Corporate v. Individual Ownership</i> ... ..	614
<i>Country Notes</i> ... ..	615
<i>The Merry Month of May.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	617
<i>A Seaside Curiosity at Rhos-on-Sea</i> ... ..	619
<i>A Book of the Week</i> ... ..	620
<i>Why are Eggs Coloured?—I.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	622
<i>Wild Country Life</i> ... ..	624
<i>Grilse</i> ... ..	625
<i>Pedigree Stock at Great Aish.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	626
<i>In the Garden</i> ... ..	629
<i>Country Home: Stoneleigh Abbey.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	630
<i>Battersea Fields in the Forties</i> ... ..	637
<i>Mistake</i> ... ..	638
<i>Otter-hunting on the Cherwell.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	639
<i>From the Farms.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	641
<i>On Lundy Isle.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	643
<i>Shooting.</i> (Illustrated) ... ..	645
<i>Improving the Ponies on Welsh Hills</i> ... ..	646
<i>Correspondence</i> ... ..	647

## EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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## CORPORATE v. INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP.

MANY who are engaged in thinking over schemes for providing small holdings and allotments will find much cause for reflection in what has occurred at Ramsey. At first, the paragraphs in the papers about it were of a somewhat sensational character, as it appeared from them that Lord de Ramsey, without rhyme or reason, but acting in the most arbitrary manner, had given notice to quit to somewhere about one thousand of his allotment tenants. Those who knew Lord de Ramsey were loth to believe that anything in the shape of injustice could be attributed to him. He belongs to a family well known for its deep and unselfish interest in the welfare of agriculture, and he has himself given abundant proof of his wish to do the best he can for the labouring classes. The subsequent history of the affair shows that the first impression was wrong, and that everything which has taken place is in accordance with what we have known of Lord de Ramsey's character as landlord. There was a meeting at Ramsey on Saturday, at which Mr. Keir Hardie was the chief speaker, and the leader of the Labour Party was not at all likely to mince his words in denouncing any member of the wealthy classes; but Mr. Keir Hardie, far from doing that, declared that Lord de Ramsey's action had been perfectly square and above board. The facts are simple enough. During the course of the last election, his brother, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes, had lost his seat, in spite of the fact that he is one of the most active and popular landlords in Great Britain, and had filled the important position of Minister of Agriculture so well as to earn the approbation alike of friends and opponents. Lord de Ramsey seems to have traced his brother's defeat to the fact that certain of the allotment-holders who were electors had made a great deal of certain grievances. Lord de Ramsey's position, and it was a perfectly sound one, was that these tenants ought to have brought their complaints to him first. It would be contrary to human nature if, among a thousand tenants of small pieces of ground, there were not some who either had, or fancied they had, cause to grumble. But common-sense might have told them that the first rational step was to go to the landlord for

redress. He is most popular among them, and his whole conduct has been marked by a sense of justice and fair play that entitles him to this consideration. However, instead of ventilating their grievance in a legitimate manner, they chose to make political capital out of it, with the result that Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes was turned out of his seat. The consequence was that Lord de Ramsey served each of his tenants with a notice to quit, and his having done so was the cause of the question being asked in the House of Commons.

In doing this it is frankly admitted by Mr. Keir Hardie and his friends that Lord de Ramsey acted in no spirit of vindictiveness. It was within his power to get rid of his tenants at a month's notice, but instead he gave them six months', his object being stated with the utmost clearness. What he said to them in effect was: You are dissatisfied with me as a landlord. I do not wish in the slightest for the allotments which you have found so serviceable, but I give you six months' notice in order that you may take the proper steps for bringing in the Urban District Council, which, as the proper authority under the Allotments Act, can take the matter in hand and become your landlord. He went so far as to offer every assistance in his power towards the furtherance of this object. To show that we are not giving a merely personal judgment on the matter, it may be worth while quoting what a leading Liberal paper says on the subject: "Lord de Ramsey's action is the best proof that he did not act from pique because his brother lost his seat." Mr. Keir Hardie said he "did not believe" that Lord de Ramsey's action was dictated by political motives. Thus the incident stands completely clear from the doubts and mists of party controversy. The outcome of the meeting was that a petition was drawn up and numerous signatures given to it praying that the District Council would take up the land and that they should become its tenants. Negotiations have been entered into with Lord de Ramsey for the purpose of carrying out this idea. We may take it, therefore, that after October the Ramsey allotment-holders will become allotment-holders under a district council instead of being allotment-holders under an owner, and the question raised is whether the new arrangement will be as advantageous to them as the old. On the whole we are inclined to think that it will work better, and it may be useful to run over our reasons for thinking so.

It is undoubtedly true that a great estate is best held by an individual. Had this not been the condition of England during the great depression the distress would have almost been unbearable, and the reason that there never has been any serious friction between landlord and tenant in England is that the former has inherited good traditions. He looks upon it as a duty if his tenants have a bad year to come to their rescue and forego the whole or a portion of his rent. A rebate of from 10 to 30 per cent. was quite common during the worst years of the depression. On the average estate, therefore, the relations between landlord and tenant are generally cordial. A landlord is not like a corporation. Even in his pastimes he is continually going about the land, and is in a position to ascertain not only what duties the farmer has neglected, but what ought to be done by himself. If the draining is deficient he is very likely to have it effectually brought before his notice when in the course of shooting or hunting he gets landed in a bog, and, besides, he comes into familiar intercourse with both the men and women on the estate. But things are very different when, instead of two or three large tenants, he has to do with many hundreds or, as in this case, over a thousand small tenants. It is not so easy for him to know them individually, and he has had very little training that will help to familiarise him with the methods of culture that are most suitable to these tiny plots of ground. Besides, it is a difficult and costly business for him to collect so many small rents. We saw in the case of Earl Carrington how convenient it was to have between him as landlord and the small holders as tenants an association which at one and the same time guaranteed him his rent and attended to the legitimate needs of the tenants. There is no reason why a local body should not fulfil the same part in the economy of allotment-holding. It must be remembered that the election is practically in the hands of the very men who are most concerned, and it is their own blame if they do not see that on the council are men who know their conditions and who can attend to their interests, while at the same time administering indifferently as between rich and poor. On the whole, we are inclined to think, then, that in the case of tiny occupations a corporate body would make a better landlord than an individual.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Mrs. Monro Walker. Mrs. Monro Walker is a daughter of Mr. Humphrey Brook Firman, and married in 1902 Mr. James Monro Walker of Pell Wall, Market Drayton, a brother of Sir Peter Walker.

## COUNTRY



## NOTES.

IN the region of politics the most interesting event of the week has been the delivery of Mr. Asquith's first Budget speech. It was from a personal point of view a triumph. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks clearly, and expresses himself lucidly. There was no haze and not much hesitation in his utterances, but the Budget itself must be described as humdrum. Following the example of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, it is evident that Mr. Asquith chooses to be safe rather than brilliant. He used the plea familiar at the opening of every new Parliament, that the accounts were those of his predecessor, so that it was impossible to disclose the schemes of retrenchment on which the present Government professes to be intent. There was very little in the way of economy indicated, and, indeed, it is to be feared that the strong socialist element in the present Administration will force the Chancellor of the Exchequer into still more colossal expenditure than we have yet experienced.

The actual proposals submitted to the House of Commons were extremely simple. A surplus of over three millions had to be dealt with, and it was disposed of by devoting half a million to the reduction of debt, £135,000 to the aid of necessitous schools, £105,000 to the extension of postal facilities in out-of-the-way districts, the repeal of the coal tax, and the remission of 1d. on the tea duty, and 2½d. off strip tobacco. Over these modest proposals we need not expect to find there will be as much excitement as was aroused when, for instance, Mr. Low proposed to put a tax on matches. Mr. Asquith apparently set himself to vindicate by action the principles enunciated during the General Election, and also to help as far as possible the poorer classes of electors. It is, at any rate, evident that only householders on a very modest scale are likely to benefit by the remission of the tea duty, and the abolition of the coal tax is plainly a tribute to Free Trade principles.

In the customary homily which the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered on the state and condition of the people, as evidenced by the figures set before him, the passage of greatest import was that which alluded to the change in the drinking habits of the British public. In a time of considerable prosperity, and with a population that has increased by between two and three millions, it is a noteworthy fact that the drinking bill of the nation has decreased in every particular. Greater sobriety appears to be exercised not only in one class, but in all classes of His Majesty's subjects. The rich man consumes less wine, and the poor man does not take so much beer. The tippler appears to have knocked off a proportion of his whisky and gin, and the consumers of brandy and wine have greatly restricted their consumption. Mr. Asquith seems somewhat in doubt whether to attribute this change to the diminished spending power that followed as a natural consequence of the expensive South African War, or to a change in our social habits. Perhaps both causes may to some extent have operated. There has evidently been a desire to save on luxuries, and, at the same time, so many more people now indulge in innocent and healthful out-of-door sports, not requiring the stimulation of alcohol, that this has had some effect on the drink bill. The temperance reformers, while rejoicing in their hearts at the turn of the tide, will probably reflect that there is plenty remaining for them to do.

A good deal has been made out of the official United States report on the German drink bill. It appears on the surface that the German drinks much less than the Englishman. Indeed, we spend 30s. a head more on alcoholic liquor per annum than does the average German, but facts like these cannot be considered

alone. Our whole food bill is a much heavier one than that of any Continental country, and statisticians tell us that the consumption of meat per head in England is much higher than it is in Germany. The truth of the matter is that the bulk of the population here are better off than the same classes on the Continent, and have been accustomed for generations to a more expensive style of living. In the ordinary course of events it may be expected that as German prosperity increases so will the drinking habits of the people.

Most of our readers will probably agree with us in welcoming the appointment of a Commission to enquire into and report upon the expediency of instituting in Scotland a system of registration of title. The chairman is Lord Dunedin of Stenton, and the other members are Sir Samuel Chisholm, Mr. Fortescue Brickdale, Mr. Smith Clark, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. Hope Finlay, and Professor Neil Kennedy. It is mostly in regard to small properties that a registration of title would be advantageous. The expenses connected with the transfer of a large estate are small in comparison with those involved in the sale or purchase of a small plot. Various methods of escaping the heavy charges have been attempted, the best that we know being that of Major Poore at Winterslow. He gave each of his householders a lease of 1,999 years, with the comment that that was long enough for most families, so as to escape the expenses incidental to the transfer of freehold land. We do not know very well why the work of the Commission should be confined to Scotland, as the question is one of increasing importance in the southern part of this island as well as in the North. A change has long been sought for, but although no very valid objection to it has ever been advanced, it seems that hitherto there always have been obstacles in the way.

## MAY AND THE LARK.

"May, May, May,"  
I heard a laverock say,  
As he flashed up sunwards singing  
His roystering roundelay,  
His notes like jewels flinging  
Into the face of Day.  
"To you it has been given,  
When all seasons pass away,  
To be through fields of heaven  
The month that lasts for aye."

"May, May, May,"  
Was she glad? I never heard  
If a word of pride or pleasure  
Struck across the jocund measure  
Of the enamoured bird.  
But I think she had no leisure  
For whispering a word.  
For down along the meadow  
Were daisied flocks unfed O!  
All dewless till she stirred.

"May, May, May,  
Here no longer must I stay,  
For the Sun is up and shining  
And for grass my eyes are pining,  
There to rest from too much light."  
There was neither sound nor sight  
Of the Lady of the May  
As the lav'rock hurtled home,  
But a hawthorn flower like foam  
On his nest-edge lightly lay.

NORA CHESSON.

Those wild waters around the Channel Islands, amid which Victor Hugo lived and which Pierre Loti still loves to haunt, have been the scene of many a sad tragedy, and once again a disaster has to be reported. On Sunday last, when the sea was perfectly calm, a pleasure steamer, the *Courier*, ran on one of the sunken rocks near Sark and sank almost immediately. Luckily, it contained fewer passengers than have been on board some of the other vessels which have come to grief in the neighbourhood, but still out of twenty people eight lost their lives, and of these we are sorry to note that several hailed from London. Every accident like this is to be deeply regretted, because though the Channel Islands attract so many holiday-makers from this country and have many charms to offer them; yet the accidents that have happened point to such danger as makes the pleasure of a visit to them dearly earned. Since the above lines were written we are sorry to say that another Channel accident has happened.

Growers of early strawberries are full of complaint just now. They say that they are getting only 4s. per lb., and that this price compares very badly with what has been received in previous years. Some of them have given ingenious reasons to account for it, but it seems to us that a very plain one lies at the door, so to speak. With the weather so wintry as it has been,



the human palate does not long outrageously for a fruit that is so delicious in the hot days of early summer. Besides it is generally conceded by those who have practical experience that the very early strawberry is not a luxury that many people pine for. Those get the best of the market who have their fruit ready about a fortnight or ten days earlier than their neighbours, but if they exceed that it is natural that the sale should be very small. Perhaps they would retort by saying that its smallness furnishes a reason why they require a large price to make the work remunerative.

There were very few of the old joyous observances this year to mark the advent of May. Gone are the Morris dances, gone are the Maypole and its adjuncts, and even the London omnibus-drivers forgot in many cases to don the white hats that they always used to put on on May 1st. We do not know even that many maidens went out in the early morning to wash their faces with May dew. In some districts of the country they would have had to wait until it melted, for the hoar frost in the early morning lay thick on the grass. And yet, though so many of these customs have faded away, the day came in with the old charm that Chaucer sang of and Queen Guinevere knew when she went a-Maying with her knights. The sky was clear and unclouded, a brilliant sun illuminated the blossoming trees of the orchard, the cuckoo's voice rang out with bell-like clearness, and the joyous lark sang at Heaven's gate; yet it is characteristic of our age that these things do not impress the popular mind, as much as the gathering of Labour to discuss its everlasting problems.

The prevalence of fires on commons and heaths about Bank Holiday-time has been noticed already in these notes. There lately have been fires in other of the moorland districts of England, on Ashdown Forest in the South, and on the Yorkshire Moors. In the latter case, at all events, it appears that there is no ground for suspicion that the heather was fired of *malice prepense*; it is rather attributed to the carelessness of trippers, which is likely to be equally destructive in its effects. On such moors as those of Yorkshire the fires are the more to be regretted, because of the risk, if not the certainty, of their destroying nesting grouse. But, of course, with a high wind there is no saying where a fire of this nature will stop, and it is much to be regretted that an unfortunate recent decision of a judge, erring greatly on the side of leniency, practically let off a man who was found in the deliberate act of lighting one of these fires in the South.

Of all the kindly cranks of whom we have heard Mr. William Hilton is the most curious. He has just been released from prison for cruelty to animals, and yet is accurately described as being guilty only of excess of kindness. Not liking the idea of a useful beast of burden being shot at the end of his honourable career, and also regarding the command "Thou shalt do no murder" as applying to the killing of a beast as well as a man, he has been in the habit of buying up ancient and worn-out horses and maintaining them in life in stables specially constructed for the purpose. It was the discovery of these poor creatures, many of them supported in slings, that led to his prosecution for cruelty to animals. One regrets his punishment, because his intention was so good, and yet it is a doubtful mercy to retain in life an animal crippled by disease and suffering from pain. In some cases the bullet is kinder than the philanthropist.

It is just as well that people should be told now and then that at certain times of year the males of the red deer and the fallow are very savage and dangerous. The remark is suggested by the recent death of a poor man in Greenwich Park, gored by one of the fallow bucks. The buck was killed directly afterwards, but just too late for its victim. It is well that the public should be warned of a possible danger; but the question also suggests itself whether it is wise to have deer at large at all, during the seasons at which stags are dangerous, in parks to which the public have rights of access. In the case of that access belonging to the public of legal right, it becomes a question of the legality of keeping a dangerous animal in such areas. A landowner or tenant is not within his rights in blocking a right of way with a bull, and a stag or buck is capable of doing just as much injury—fatal injury, often—to human life. It is futile to argue that this or that male deer has no character for ferocity, for it is perfectly well known that they are all liable to develop ferocity at any moment during certain seasons. The curious point, however, about this latest onslaught made by the fallow buck in Greenwich Park, is that it occurred at a time of year when it certainly was not to be expected that he would be savage.

During this year the experiments in the open-air treatment by the Zoological Society have been extended, and with the most gratifying results. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more noticeable than in the case of the monkeys. Deaths from tuberculosis have

been conspicuous only by their absence in those kept in the outdoor cages, while this disease has been by no means inactive among those kept indoors. The erection of the magnificent outdoor aviaries for wading birds, gulls and herons, and parrots has proved, in the estimation of the majority of the Fellows and the public, a signal success. But there is a small minority who appear to regard living birds as museum specimens, and would see them kept in small cages so that they may the more easily be examined and identified. The powers that be, however, rightly hold that the comfort and well-being of the captives is the first consideration, and most certainly the more generous system of confinement enables the creatures to display their natural habits and dispositions in a way that would be impossible in close quarters. The recently-opened sea-lions' and otters' ponds may be taken as illustrations of this point so far as mammals are concerned, while the new antelope paddocks, opened last week, afford a further demonstration, if this be necessary.

We do not need to go far afield to see one very striking instance of the value of the military training which Lord Roberts and others wish to impose on us as a national safeguard. If we go into any of the larger hotels, where they have men waiters, either in London or the provincial towns, we find ourselves waited upon by a body of men who are not, perhaps, in actual measurements quite equal to the British average; but what is quite certain is that their walk, carriage, and way of holding themselves are very much better than that which the average British waiter or Briton of any profession has led us to expect. They are upright, with head well thrown back, chest expanded, and shoulders squared; and there can be no reasonable doubt that they owe this excellent carriage to their term of military service. Neither is there the least doubt, seeing that the service has this effect on the German and other Continental people, that it would have a like good influence on our own men.

#### IN GALWAY.

Poor and bare is the stony field  
In the black of the pool-stained peat:  
What can the waste of the bogland yield?  
"The print of the faeries' feet  
Golden and fleet,  
The light of their feet."  
Sparse the grass on the patch of soil,  
And bitter the brackish streams:  
What shall you gain to requite your toil?  
"The wealth of a harvest of dreams,  
Gathering of gleams,  
The radiance of dreams."  
Mean the cabin and scant the bread  
In the lanes where the May bloom swings:  
What can you store for the years ahead?  
"A vision of May-white wings,  
Flutterings of Springs,  
The light of their wings."

ETHEL WHEELER.

The doings of professional wrestlers, though of intense interest to a certain class of society, do not much concern others, and yet the contest between Hackenschmidt and Madrali stood out as something quite different from the ordinary trial of strength and skill. The victory of the Russian champion was swift and complete, and no doubt exists as to his being the better wrestler of the two; yet the struggle does not decide what is the most interesting point in regard to wrestling at the present moment, and that, needless to say, is the ability of one of the professors of jiu-jitsu to withstand the strength and skill of such a wrestler as the victor in this contest. It is understood that the Japanese has frequently expressed his willingness to meet the Russian, and if a match can be arranged between them the result would be very keenly watched. It is obvious even from what we know that the Japanese understand a kind of wrestling that would be of very great service to our custodians of the public peace, and has, in fact, been taught to many of them. We know it is of real value, but it would require such a match as we have indicated between a first-rate exponent of Japanese wrestling and a man like Hackenschmidt to disclose its real worth.

The fruit bloom in Southern orchards has suffered heavily from the severe north-east winds of last week. Of course, this applies to certain kinds only. Apple was not forward enough to incur injury. The earlier-flowering cherries were in bloom, and a good deal of damage has been done to them; but the later sorts were not in flower before the cold winds came, and the coming put a healthy check on the flowering. The plum blossom has shown a good deal of its usual caprice, in one orchard being plentiful enough and in another, quite close by, conspicuous by absence. Generally speaking, it has been scarce where it was plentiful last year, and *vice versa*, but in every case where it has been abundant it must have been badly damaged.



## THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY.



W. Muir.

DAFFODILS UNDER COB-NUT TREES.

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PERHAPS the most important consideration in regard to May at the present moment is whether or no it will bring with it a change of weather. April, which opened with a few days that seemed a foretaste of summer, developed in the course of its progress so much cold and storm that we seemed to have been carried back to January or December. It may be either a coincidence or a direct effect, but it is curious to remark that a period of great volcanic disturbance has frequently been accompanied in the world's history by

extremes of heat and cold, and those who live in the South this year have had an experience that, unfortunately, is far from being rare in the history of the English climate. Slowly Spring brought forth her flowers, and after them came winds so keen and cutting, and skies so dull and leaden, that it seemed as though half their beauty were taken away. Yet undoubtedly it is during the progress of a slow spring like the present one that we have the best opportunities of studying the beauty of the season. On the Continent, and particularly in



W. Muir.

SNOW-WHITE BLOOM.

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those parts of it which lie toward the north, spring comes with a rush; the frost stops, the snow dissolves, and immediately the flowers put in their appearance, so that in the course of a very few weeks the aspect of the landscape is transformed from that of winter to summer. But here in England the change is much more gradual. Towards the end of March a few shy wildings of wood and field begin to extrude their green spikes, and even to develop blossom. Under the cold skies of April the fresh pure tints of spring become more widely spread and more clearly defined. The primroses this year, for instance, began to show themselves early, at first in little dwarfed flowers that seemed to be cramped by the coldness of the winds in which they found themselves; then gradually the river-side, the roots of the old hedgerows, patches in the copse, and certain banks became yellow with the pale flower now attaining its largest size and glory. Following immediately after the cowslips began to show yellow in the meadows. They come in multitudes, even on high, bare ground, though, like the early primroses, the first comers are small and poor, yet, nevertheless, welcome, because they are the forerunners



W. R. Gay.

## WILD HYACINTHS.

Copyright.

of thirty miles, with the Bank of England as centre, it would be found that this area is more or less subject to pilfering. And we do not refer to the stealing of the mere blossoms themselves; that would be a trivial offence, as the flowers would bloom again next season, just as they do in a garden; but the custom is to uproot the plants altogether. There are many inhabitants of our poorer suburbs and the crowded areas of London who will have flowers in pots, and flowers in their small pieces of garden. They plant them in spring, but do not seem to take care of them after they have flowered; or, it may be, the roots perish in the dust and grime of the town. However that may be, there is a

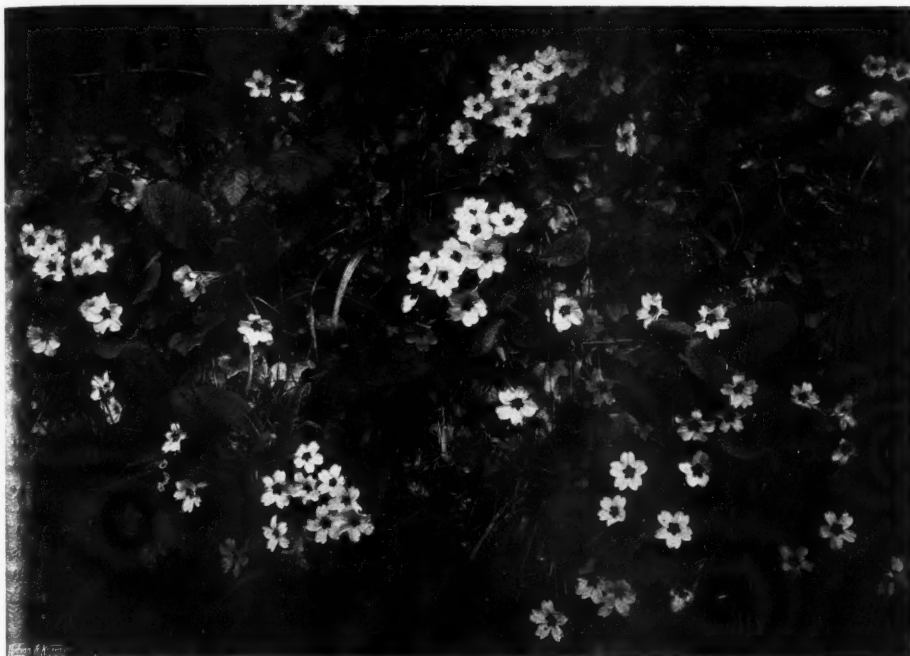


C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

## THE ANEMONE WOOD.

Copyright.





W. R. Gay.

## IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING.

Copyright.

poor, and he who would formulate some measure of protection would deserve well of the country. Fortunately, the wild blossoms on the trees are not subject to similar depredations. At all events, it is impossible for any gutter-snipe to root up a tree, and, though now and again damage may be done by climbing and taking the blossoms, this does not go on to such an extent as to ruin the aspect of the country. It would take finer language than we possess to describe the appearance of woodlands at this season of the year. The buds are opened, and yet the leaves are not full, so that the woodlands stand, as it were, with a beautiful, light, shimmering dress of green, vivid as it only can be in spring and early summer. Some few, indeed, are not quite at that stage yet. The oak in the places with which we are most familiar is, to use a Tennysonian word, "delaying," but the black ash buds are already bursting into leaf. If an old adage is to be trusted, this portends a wet summer; but we hope for once that the omen will be a false one. The coniferous trees are already showing the green beautiful spikes which shine like new clothes beside those that grew last year. The blossoming trees are but slowly coming to perfection, yet here and there a white mass of blossom on the

wild cherry introduces an element of gaiety into the green of the woodland. Seen from a distance some of these trees are as white as the meadows that just now are so rich in daisies that the onlooker might be forgiven for imagining a light shower of snow had fallen on them. Indeed, so cold has April been that white snow has lain beside the white daisies.

## A SEASIDE CURIOSITY AT RHOS-ON-SEA.

THIRTY or forty years ago, when Llandudno was in its infancy as a pleasure resort, very few visitors thither failed to visit the ancient Royal fishing weir at Llandrillo-yn-Rhos, now called Rhos-on-Sea, which was then one of the principal attractions of the district. Of late years this ancient seaside curiosity has been less talked about than when the renowned Parry-Evans and his celebrated dog Jack used to fish the wicker enclosure regularly, and afford considerable sport to the thousands who walked over the shoulder of the Little Orme to see them at it. Scarcely a day passes, however, without the old weir being drawn, some two or three hours after the turn of the tide; but when the shrewd and, strange to say, forgotten practice of baiting the network is revived, as we understand it will be in the near future, there is



Miss C. J. Bacon.

## EARLY PRIMROSES IN THE COPSE.

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huge market for primroses, violets, and bluebells every spring, and this want is supplied by a wandering class of people who, apparently, earn a living by collecting any unconsidered trifles that may come to hand. No doubt the custodians of the public parks, woodlands, and other open spaces have drawn up regulations prohibiting this; but it would take a vast army of attendants to put the rules in force, as every individual has a right to roam over these places, and the grubbing up of the plants goes on continually. The practice is to dig them just before they flower, so that the purchaser may have the satisfaction of seeing a few unhealthy blossoms appear. The primrose by this means has been almost entirely destroyed. We do not say it cannot be found within a comparatively short distance of London, but it exists only in very small numbers, so as scarcely to be worth the attention of the root-seller. Violets have not suffered quite so much as the primroses, but anyone who will visit the stalls outside Farringdon Market will speedily have evidence of the inroads made upon this delightful flower. But perhaps the bluebell is the greatest favourite of all. It has the merit of flowering pretty freely when transplanted from its native glade to a flower-pot or a piece of garden ground, though its life there is as brief as that of its companion florets. No one who had not seen the immense quantities of this flower collected and carried off could have any conception of the extent of the robbery. Luckily it is extremely abundant, and so far has not suffered very appreciably; but every year the demand becomes greater, and unless those who have charge of the places where it grows take some pains to counteract the evil, the bluebell will become rare. As an example of the effects of this wholesale taking away for the purpose of sale, it is not necessary to go further than Epping Forest. There, only a few years back, it was possible to see blowing in countless myriads many plants which have to be searched for long and carefully before they can be found again. And it is just in such a place as this that the loss is most deeply felt. In private parks and fields the flowers, like those in Gray's "Elegy," very often blush unseen. But it is boasted that Epping Forest is now the people's freehold forever, and scarcely a Saturday goes by without thousands of people from the dreary East End going there to get some little taste of country sights and sounds, while its proximity to London makes it the favourite rendezvous for the innumerable school feasts and days in the country which are now got up by private subscription. Those, therefore, who are depleting the beautiful districts of their wild flowers are in the direct sense of the word robbing the



every prospect that the exciting daily practice of drawing the weir will attract crowds of visitors, and become once more one of the most interesting sights along the North Wales Coast.

The late Mr. Frank Buckland, during his official survey of the ancient fisheries of the United Kingdom, spent considerable time here, and in his report he describes this relic of antiquity as one of the most unique objects of the kind in the British Isles. It was then worked and owned by Mr. Parry-Evans, a fine old yeoman, whose hearty laugh, mingled with the barks of delight of his faithful Jack, could be heard almost from Colwyn Bay. This worthy was never prouder than when showing to visitors the original deeds whereby the weir was granted to one of his ancestors in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and which bore the signature of "Richard, Earl of Leycester." The document is still at Rhos Fynach, and recites the several processes by which its possession was handed down from before the date of Magna Charta. It must have been a possession of considerable value, for it was part of the endowment of the Cistercian Abbey of Conway, which was founded by Llewelyn, the last independent Prince of Wales. After his overthrow and death Edward I. ordered the removal of the abbey from Conway to Maenan, near Llanrwst, but he made an exchange for the fishing weir part of the endowment, which subsequently came into the possession of the loyal Lords of Rhufoniawc, and from them the late Mr. Parry-Evans could trace the connection of his family with the weir for several centuries. In January, 1867, an enquiry into the fishing rights of the North Wales Coast was held, the Commission sitting at Conway. At that time there were three fishing weirs at Rhos, two large ones and a small one. Mr. Parry-Evans appeared before the Commission and proved his title to the weir, producing the document just referred to; and the result was that the other weirs, which were recent innovations, were closed, but Mr. Parry-Evans's title in the older one was confirmed, and a certificate to that effect was given him.

A graphic account of the scenes afforded almost daily at the weir during the sixties is given by a distinguished writer of that period who was an officer in the Imperial Ottoman army, from which the following extract is worth quoting: "Stretching out to seaward runs a line of strong stakes, which form the weir. This weir belongs to the owner of the farm, and has been held by the same family for ages. The owner, a fine, burly yeoman, one of the type now so rarely met in England, shows the signature of the lordly Earl of Leicester, granting to one of his ancestors the fishing of the weir on certain conditions, and in his family it has remained ever since. It is worth the walk to Mr. Parry-Evans's 'Rose Cottage' to catch him as he, his dog Jack, and his farm servants take their way to the weir at low water. A long stretch of sand leads to the stakes, and any fish which at high water have found their way inside are sure to be trapped. The weir is but a walk from Llandudno, and is drawn twice a day, and yet no one seems to know of it. On the stakes of a summer evening half-a-dozen herons and cormorants may generally be seen waiting for the receding waves. These birds are by no means particular, and will pounce upon the herrings or young salmon with the greatest impartiality. The sea gurgles and eddies among the stakes loth to leave as the dog Jack dashes into the shallow water. A splash and a long line of foam shows where a heavy salmon is trying to escape, but it is useless, for the water becomes more and more shallow, while the barks of delight as the dog gets nearer and nearer the frightened fish, become more and more frequent. And now Parry-Evans and his men join in the fray, and the voice of the sturdy yeoman is heard, as, flourishing his net over his head, he lands salmon after salmon. The smaller mackerel and herrings are unheeded in the first excitement of the moment; but suddenly there is a loud shout, and the dog Jack, evidently scared, comes splashing through the deeper water seeking safety at his master's heels. It is evident something more than usual is passing. Lower and lower ebbs the water, and more and more excited grow the men, as a mighty mass lies stranded on the sand. Ropes are procured, help is sent for, and a shark 8ft. long is captured. This happened but a few months since (1865), and the great fish caught in the weir was exposed in the Market Hall of Llandudno, and then sent to be stuffed. The previous year a sturgeon more than 200lb. in weight was taken; when this and the adjoining weir produced over 1,000lb. of salmon. During the herring season many thousands are caught."

Jack came originally from Prussia. His owner calls him an otter terrier. Some years ago a schooner came to the coast near Rhos, and the crew, having run short of provisions, landed with the dog. Mr. Parry-Evans's attention was drawn to Jack by seeing him swim about very cleverly round the schooner, so he made a bargain with the sailors, and gave them a bag of potatoes in exchange for the dog. He told me an idea suddenly struck him, that if a dog could be made to assist human beings in hunting and shooting, why should he not also assist them in fishing? The dog, of all animals, was put on earth by the great Creator in order to assist human beings in getting their living; for instance, how would it be possible to manage sheep

at all on the hillsides unless the shepherd had a dog? And I often wonder whether the first shepherd we read of, namely, Abel, had a sheepdog to assist him in keeping his sheep. Parry-Evans's sheep are water sheep, such as salmon, herrings, mackerel, dog-fish, sharks, and other representatives of the sea-flocks of our old friend Proteus, who, Horace informs us, took the opportunity of Deucalion's flood to drive the hill-tops

Omne quum Proteus  
Pecus egit altos  
Visere montes.

Jack, however, required some education, and it was some time before the instinct of the dog became in accord with the brain of the man. Jack apparently had some difficulty in seeing the fish if they were quiet. I have observed that a dog does not appear to see well under water; he depends more upon scent to find out and follow his prey. Mr. Parry-Evans found out that by lifting up Jack to the level of his own head he could see the fish better, and he described to me, in Homeric language, the fight between Jack and a very large salmon. The dog was taught to dive for the salmon, and to "back fin" him, all this without injuring the fish for the market. Jack was also of use in coursing the shoals of herrings enclosed within the sides of the weir, and hunting them so that they should swim in the required direction. Mr. Parry-Evans, from his experience with Jack, is certain that salmon anglers may train intelligent dogs to land their salmon, and become a substitution for the gaff generally in use.

## A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

IN a preface to her new book, *Fenwick's Career* (Smith, Elder), Mrs. Humphry Ward informs us that the book "owes something to the past in its picturing of the present," and there will be no difficulty in finding a clue to her plot. The story, in its main features, is that of Romney the artist, who, as we need hardly recall to the reader, left his peasant wife in the North, and after many adventures in London went back at the end of his career to die in her arms. In the story the place of Romney is taken by Mr. Fenwick; but he is not quite a Romney, and, perhaps, unconsciously, Mrs. Humphry Ward has raised quite a different question. She pictures the young artist as a crude, overbearing, energetic, and somewhat ill-bred provincial, whose self-conceit, jealousy, and quarrelsomeness bring to a comparatively sudden close a career that opens brilliantly enough in the art circles of London. Inventing a reason for the neglect of Phoebe, she avoids the quarrel that Romney probably had, and makes the separation between them in great part due to accident. The part of the beautiful and versatile Lady Hamilton is played by a very different character, Mme. de Pastourelles, whose type of beauty is altogether different from that of Lady Hamilton, and whose character offers an equally brilliant contrast. She is married to a husband who has deserted her for an actress, but remains true and faithful to him, ready at a moment's notice to follow him to the world's end should he beckon her. Her father, Lord Findon, is a great patron of art, and, like Lady Hamilton, she sits for her portrait to the painter from the provinces. He, fresh from rusticity, finds in her something he has never known before, and the portrait is one of his highest achievements. There is at this stage nothing whatever in the shape of flirtation between them, and Mme. de Pastourelles, instead of looking up to the painter as a friend and protector in the way that Lady Hamilton did, assumes the opposite rôle, and is the kindest and best of patronesses to him; but this does not prevent an outbreak of jealousy on the part of Phoebe, who comes to London and sees under very dramatic circumstances this portrait of Mme. de Pastourelles in the studio of her husband, and departs in great wrath and indignation, subsequently leaving this country for Canada, where she has many adventures, while her husband is endeavouring to paint his way to fame in the capital; but the point that, in our opinion, Mrs. Humphry Ward has missed is the opportunity of contrasting the provincial with the London artist. In every walk of life we constantly see men arriving from the country full of energy and go, and quickly placing themselves in front of those who to all outward appearances possessed much superior advantages. The fault of the provincial, as a rule, is that, though strong and rugged, he lacks finish and grace. It is certainly so in literature, and, perhaps, to a lesser extent in art. The cosmopolitan, on the contrary, usually has a much better understanding of the technique of any art to which he is called; but his very attention to detail often weakens the central motive, so that while his work is calculated to give pleasure to a certain class of connoisseur, it fails of that arresting and subtle strength which belongs to the highest achievement. Now, Mrs. Humphry Ward makes her provincial rude without real strength, and the best of her artists are those who are bred in the town, thus missing the effective contrasts that certainly would have strengthened her novel. We suppose, too, she was afraid to venture on the very difficult task of

portraying a counterpart of Lady Hamilton. It would have been an achievement, indeed, to place a woman of that type on paper, as she belonged to the same tribe as that Egyptian Circe of whom it was said that "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." Mme. de Pastourelles, on the contrary,

so good. Many years pass while Mr. Fenwick is gradually frittering away material and promise of a great career, and it is only at the end, when ruin and despair are seizing him, that he falls in love with his patroness and model. Perhaps the expression "falls in love" is somewhat too strong, as indeed throughout



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OLD LEAVES AND NEW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

is a saint in human form, whose amiability and goodness are from the beginning of the novel to the end absolutely flawless. She is free from all the ordinary weaknesses, passions, and hatreds of her sex, so that the impression left is that of an excellent woman, who would have been more interesting if not quite

the book he shows little of Romney's passion; but he is hungry for sympathy, and delights in the intercourse of this beautiful and amiable woman. She, on her part, seems to have sacredly given her affection to another artist who figures in the story, who also is a model of righteousness; but disappointment



that maketh the heart sick causes her to turn to Fenwick, and it is only at the last moment that she hears of the true state of affairs, when she acts the part of the beneficent angel and plays the mediator between the two parties who have been estranged for years, so that in the end Fenwick and Phœbe, purified by their experience, pass into the condition of sober and quiet citizens, as Mrs. Humphry Ward shows in a passage of unusual eloquence:

And so they kissed; knowing well that the years are irreparable, and yet defying them; conscious, as first youth is never conscious, of the black forces which surround our being, and yet full of passionate hope; aware of death, as youth is never aware of it, and yet determined to shape something out of life; sad and yet rejoicing, "cast down but not destroyed."

The story is altogether a somewhat depressing exhibition of the sordid side of art and artists. We of recent years have had the studio very much in fiction, and perhaps Mrs. Humphry Ward has come to the conclusion that the public is satiated with the careless happy Bohemianism, the intense early struggles, and the final victory, that are the salient features in this form of novel. But she set herself a great difficulty to overcome. The conditions of art have changed exceedingly since Romney's time, and it must have puzzled her

to invent a *métier* for her genius. Perhaps the sort of painter he is may be best shown by the following description of one of his pictures:

It represented a young woman seated on the edge of a Westmoreland ghyll, or ravine. Behind her the white water of the beck flowed steeply from shelf to shelf; beyond the beck rose far-receding walls of mountain, purple on purple, blue on blue. Light, scantily-nourished trees—sycamore or mountain ash, climbed the green sides of the ghyll, and framed the woman's form. She sat on a stone, bending over a frail new-born lamb upon her lap, whereof the mother lay beside her. Against her knee leant a fair-haired child. The pitiful concern in the woman's lovely eyes was reflected in the soft wonder of the child's. Both, it seemed, were of the people. The drawing was full of rustical suggestion, touched here and there by a harsh realism that did but heighten the general harmony. The woman's grave comeliness flowed naturally, as it were, out of the scene. She was no model, posing with a Westmoreland stream for background. She seemed a part of the fells; their silences, their breezes, their pure waters had passed into her face.

Still, it may be said of the novel that it is very opportune in the time of its publication. Its leaves will still be fresh while we are all discussing the pictures in the exhibition of the present year; and Mrs. Humphry Ward has such an intimate familiarity with studios and their occupants that no doubt her novel will be read with much interest.

## WHY ARE EGGS COLOURED?—I.

TRY how we may, we cannot dismiss the fact that the egg-collector is a curse to ornithology. He is cruel, greedy, and unscrupulous. To him we owe the final extinction of many of our rarer British birds, and not even legislation will save the remnant from his insatiable appetite. As might be expected, he is also a singularly ignorant person; to him eggs are so many coloured counters, so many souvenirs of trespass and subterfuge. These pests have been known ere now, after having taken as many specimens of a rare egg as they can contrive to bear away, to smash such as may remain by way of enhancing the value of their spoils. No more eloquent proof of their turpidity could be found than the fact that for many years past, in certain parts of Scotland, not a single pair of red or black throated divers has succeeded in hatching its eggs. Howsoever cunning the wretched birds may be in seeking new nesting sites as each old one is despoiled, they are outwitted by their arch-enemy the "collector." Let his name be anathema!

Nevertheless, egg-collecting is not wholly a vile pastime.



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THE CHIFF-CHAFF'S HOME.

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On the contrary, to those imbued with a spirit of kindness for living things, and with the desire to gain at first hand intimate knowledge of the mysteries of life, and of the problems which it presents, this same egg-collecting affords, most emphatically,



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JAY AND NEST.

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the finest training in methods and habits of observation that can be desired. So far, however, egg-collecting has scarcely risen above the level of a hobby, for it is a fact that the scientific results which have followed from its pursuit are strangely meagre. Almost all that is worth knowing, indeed, about birds' eggs we owe to the much-despised "closet naturalist." This is not as it should be; and not as it will be, for already more philosophy is being displayed in the pursuit of oology. So far the principal achievement of the oologist has been the demonstration of the likeness between the eggs of the gull and plovers; though of this they made no use, but left the intimate relationship between these birds to be pushed home by the anatomist.

To the philosophical naturalist we owe all our important generalisations as to the colours of eggs, and similar matters, though some of these need revision. As an example let us take the conclusions current to-day as to the significance of white eggs.



Speculation on this matter began, and seems to have ended, with Alfred Russell Wallace's hypothesis propounded some years ago. He, it may be remembered, endeavoured to show that birds which laid white eggs deposited them in holes in order to conceal them, and invented explanations for certain exceptions to this rule. But surely when we come to examine the facts more closely we shall find that the interpretation is quite otherwise. That is to say, these birds lay white eggs because they nest in holes, and not that they nest in holes because they lay white eggs. It is not difficult, indeed, to see why this should be so; for coloured eggs would become practically invisible in these dark places, and, consequently, would be in hourly jeopardy of being overrun by the bird when entering the nest, and broken, or would, when the space was large enough, be in danger of rolling away from the sitting bird and so fail to obtain incubation. By their whiteness, such faint rays of light



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as gain admittance to the nest are reflected by the white shell, and, consequently, no eggs escape the necessary attention of the sitting bird.

The white eggs of wood-pigeons and turtle-doves have always been a stumbling-block; and much special pleading has been resorted to by many for explaining away the difficulties they present. It has been urged that here the whiteness is protective, since, from the loose structure of the nest, light is always visible through its interstices when seen from below, and thus it becomes impossible to distinguish the white shell from light patches. But such enemies as may be on the look-out for these eggs would attack from above, when such confusion between substance and shadow could not occur. Surely the matter is to be interpreted in another way. That is to say, the whiteness of the eggs of these two species is a survival from the time when, like the rock-dove and stock-dove, they nested in dark places. The lack of pigment in the shell at the present day, under the new circumstances, is to be attributed either to the fact that the eggs are sufficiently well concealed by the overhanging foliage, or that enemies are not sufficiently numerous to render the development of pigment necessary, or, failing adaptability to do this, to bring about the extinction of the species.

That our contention with regard to eggs laid in holes is correct seems highly probable, since it would appear that birds which have taken to nesting in holes, after having developed pigmented egg-shells, have had recourse to covering this coloured surface with a chalky layer of white. The eggs of the puffin may serve as a case in point. Beneath the white layer the coloured surface can easily be demonstrated. The fact that there are many other eggs similarly encrusted with a white, chalky layer, concealing bright colour beneath, but which are not laid in holes, does not necessarily vitiate our argument.



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*MEADOW-PIPIT.*

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Birds cannot determine the nature of the surface colouring of the egg at will, and the white covering of these eggs may originally have been developed because they were laid in holes. That the choice of nesting sites for various reasons oscillates, may be seen in the case of the puffin and snow-bunting, for example. The former will occasionally lay its eggs in exposed places, while the eggs of the snow-bunting, which are remarkable for their richness of coloration, are, in Scotland, deposited in holes—a newly-acquired habit rendered necessary by the nature of the terrain—but in the Siberian tundras they are placed in nests under tussocks of grass. The eggs of the primæval birds were, without doubt, white, with a tendency to develop red pigment, such as seen in the eggs of that archaic reptile, the *sphenodon*, or *tuatera*, of New Zealand to-day. From such a beginning the evolution of coloured eggs began. This being so, we may fairly suppose that, while some birds' eggs have secondarily acquired a white surface, others have never developed colour. The fact that the great majority of birds' eggs are more or less richly coloured is not without significance, yet oologists have done practically nothing to discover what this significance may be. In some cases, without doubt, the pigmentation serves a purpose—protective resemblance. That is to say, by a gradual process of selection from indefinite variations, a gradual weeding out has taken place of all glaringly-conspicuous patterns and colours, until perfect harmony between the egg and its surroundings was attained. Examples of such eggs are seen in those of the plover tribe.

But how are we to account for the striking colours of those eggs which are laid in nests in hedgerows and trees, for example? An attempt has been made to include many of these, at any rate, under the head of protective coloration; but this is certainly a very unsatisfactory way out of the difficulty, for, where protection is needed, this must be assumed by the nest, since, if this be conspicuous, protective coloration will hardly save the egg. Again, protective coloration means a style of coloration which induces confusion between the egg and its surroundings, and we see little evidence of this in coloured eggs laid in open nests—such, for instance, as the eggs of the thrush. Here is a matter well worthy of the attention of the outdoor naturalist.

The colours of cuckoos' eggs we propose to deal with on another occasion, partly on account of consideration of space, and partly because so many exceptional factors have to be taken into account. In a large number of instances it is probable that the colour of the shell has now no relation to environmental conditions. The pigments thereof, being derived from the blood, may be regarded as waste products originally utilised to secure the safety of the egg; but where protective coloration is no longer necessary, this pigmentation of the shell is still retained, if it is not directly harmful by causing the eggs to become conspicuous, and this probably because no selective influence



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has been called into action whereby this waste product is disposed of in some other way.

Since the pigmentation of the egg-shell and of the feathers alike is derived from the blood, it seems strange that there should be so little in common between the colours which they severally present. But though there are black birds, there are no black eggs; and while blue eggs and blue feathers are both common, yet this hue is due to pigment in the case of the egg-shell, but to structural peculiarities in the feather. As a matter of fact, of course such a relation was scarcely to be expected, for the pigmentation of the egg-shell was primarily, at least, due to protective requirements, which necessarily demand a quite different type of coloration from that which would serve the active bird.

W. P. PYCRAFT.

(To be continued.)

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### THE NESTING OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

**A**LTHOUGH as late as March 25th the uplands, on which the snow had lain continuously since February 1st, were visited by still another bizzard, yet the eagles seemed to be in no doubt of the fact that spring was at hand, and were busily engaged in repairing their last year's eyrie. Readers of these pages may remember that some time ago I mentioned in these notes that a pair of eagles were working at their eyrie as early as January 27th. These birds lived in an extensive deer forest, and shared the ground with another pair; both had their eyries in large firs, and, as is usually the case with the eagles, the nests were not placed near the trunk, but far out amongst the large branches, about halfway up the trees. The one eyrie had been tenanted continuously for upwards of twenty years, while the other had only been built the previous spring. On the last day of March I visited both eyries, and found that in the case of the newer of the two the branch on which the eyrie was built had been broken clean off by the weight of snow, and the eagles were nowhere to be seen. Two years previously they had their nest on a low ledge of rock a mile or so distant; but here there were no signs of life, so evidently the eagles had sought other quarters. The other eyrie is (or rather was) some four miles distant, and this was next visited. What was my surprise to find it also lying on the ground, although in this case the branch had remained firm. The eyrie was a huge mass of very ancient sticks—the accumulation of many years—and the birds having left this site also, the estate was, for the first time for more than a quarter of a century, without a known eagle's eyrie. The keeper told me that in two or three previous winters the eyrie had been broken down, but that on each occasion the eagles had built a new one. He was of opinion that they had gone across to a hill on the other side of the valley, where they used to nest at one time, and, as this hill is on a grouse moor, either grouse or eagles must suffer! On April 4th I visited an eyrie in a neighbouring forest, which had been unoccupied last spring, although one bird was continually in the vicinity, and the nest was repaired and seemed to be used as a larder, as I found the

remains of a blue hare in it, so that most likely the hen had been trapped or shot just before the eggs were laid. This spring, I am glad to say, the eyrie is occupied, and the hen was sitting very closely on April 14th, so much so, in fact, that though I looked carefully at the eyrie from above, at a distance of 50 yds., I could see no trace of the hen, who did not take wing until I was on the point of climbing the tree. Even then she did not go out of sight, but sailed lazily round and round in the distance. The tree is an easy one to climb, in fact, one of the easiest in the forest, and I soon had a sight of the eyrie, which contained two eggs—one rather smaller than the other. The eyrie was constructed of the usual fir sticks; but I noticed that there were fewer green branches than usual, while the inner lining was almost completely composed of bracken instead of coarse grass. Let us hope the eggs will hatch off safely, and two more eaglets be launched in the forest world.

### THE HEATHER-BURNING IN THE DEER FORESTS.

The year 1906 will long be remembered for the glorious weather experienced during the first fifteen days of April, each of which seemed more brilliantly



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*REED-BUNTING OR REED-SPARROW.*

fine than its predecessor. On the 1st a great deal of snow lay on the mountains, but the great heat soon melted it off, and for ten days burning went on uninterruptedly. Two days ago I read in an English paper of a fire on a Westmorland grouse moor which was a mile in breadth. A keeper on a Scottish forest would have thought absolutely nothing of this, as only last week a keeper I know had a fire three miles broad burning merrily; in fact, they say, "The mair heather ye can licht in the day the better," and what seems rather strange is that they have not the slightest nervousness of those large blazes, but, having seen that the fire is bounded either by a snowdrift or a burn, they go calmly home, leaving the fire to burn for several days. Very occasionally the heather is dry enough for firing in December, and this keeper, while hind-shooting, kindled a stretch of heather which burned for many days, and the glare at night was so brilliant that many inhabitants of a village some twelve miles distant came on the scene under the impression that some mansion-house was in flames, while the keeper calmly smoked his pipe at his lodge. This year so many fires were going on at the same time that the smell of burning was everywhere, and the haze so dense as to blot out even the nearer hills. On many of the southern hillsides, however, the snow had drifted to such a depth—the greatest since 1895—that only a comparatively small part of the hill was clear, and so only small fires could be lighted. The last day of the burning season is, officially, April 12th, but most of the forests—on applying to the Sheriff of the County—have it prolonged to April 16th, and often April 26th. I believe that all the young heather plants which appear two years later come from seed.

### THE ARRIVAL OF OUR EARLIER MIGRANTS.

Although at the date of writing—April 20th—the majority of our summer birds have still to arrive, yet several of our earlier species are already here. The wheatear—always first on the scene—arrived towards the end of March, and is now everywhere seen flitting amongst the stony waste lands. Ring-ousels I have not yet noted, although, doubtless, they have been some time on the moors, as last season they were seen in numbers as early as April 3rd—the day before the prolonged snowstorm. The sand-martin was not ed for the first time on April 12th, and I saw several of their cousins the



swallows, which were already uttering their song, on April 20th. The tree-pipits and meadow-pipits have now returned to the moorlands, and all the larger moorland-nesting birds have been on the hills for a month or more. The curlews and redshanks were spread over the moors everywhere on March 18th, uttering their love songs light-heartedly, and the last of the fieldfares has now left. The woodcock I first heard using their nesting note on April 12th—a beautiful calm evening—and three days after I heard a curlew using its alarm note as though it had already nested, which would be very early indeed for this part of the country. The missel-thrushes are now singing more strongly than for years past, and many of the hens are laying. The woodcock are also sitting.

#### THE LAPWINGS AND A CHANGE OF WEATHER.

On the evening of April 15th, while cycling home at dusk, I was struck by the fact that the curlews and lapwings seemed to be greatly excited, and to be calling much later than is usually the case. It is, of course, true that these birds call right through the night, but on this particular evening they were using their full nesting notes, while usually their night cry is only a plaintive wail. Everywhere the plovers were dashing madly through the air, turning right on their backs, as is their custom in the midst of their "song," and one came swooping to within a foot or two of my cycle, his cry, when he saw his mistake, breaking off into a kind of "gurgle." At the time I was cycling down from Ben Muich Dhui with my friend, and although the night was very mild, with a strong south-west wind, I was fairly sure that a change was brewing. Sure enough, next morning the wind had gone right round, and rain fell heavily, soon changing into dry snow, which covered trees and ground with a thick mantle of white.

#### FROM SUMMER TO WINTER.

Nowhere are we subject to such sudden changes of weather as in the Highlands, and one never knows what the next day may bring forth. As you set out for the hills on a sunny April morning, you little think that ere nightfall the ground will be hidden by a deep coating of snow, and midwinter will once more reign. The first sign of a change is noted when you reach the high grounds, and from here you see white snow-clouds to the west, which are rapidly approaching. You linger a few minutes to watch a pair of water-



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GREY LINNET.

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ousels constructing their dome-shaped nest, which would undoubtedly be mistaken by the novice for a collection of moss. The birds are continually flying up with nesting material, and make a very pretty picture when they both are at the nest at once. On the mountains to the west are still deep snowdrifts from the winter blizzards, but their summits are quite clear of snow. Another sign of the approaching storm is the silence of all bird-life; in fact, not a bird has been singing since early morning. Gradually the mountains are blotted out, one by one, and you see the storm sweeping down the valley at express speed. At present there is little, if any, wind, but, as the storm approaches, you can see the snow driving onwards at a great speed. Soon the drift is upon you, and you are almost blinded by the snow. A slight clearing to the south shows you that the storm is comparatively local, as the hills lying in that direction are still clear. After an hour or so of exceptionally large snowflakes, the sky slowly clears and the sun shines out once more; but this is only a temporary clearing, as away to the west the sky is as threatening as ever. What a change is there in the landscape! Instead of green grass, and all the country rejoicing in spring, the whole landscape for miles is covered with snow, and on the mountain peaks, where before the sun was

shining, the snow is now being drifted along in clouds before the gale, while the temperature has everywhere fallen to within a degree or so of freezing-point. Thus in one short hour the summer weather has gone and winter taken its place.

SETON P. GORDON.

## GRILSE.

THE movements of the grilse in the Severn are so remarkable, or, rather, their almost total absence from the river, that it is worth while to try and give some explanation of them. The following view is put forward with very great diffidence, and it has very little evidence to support it; but if it is in any way true, it is well worth consideration, as it alters the whole basis of the existing fishery laws.

As is well known, the Severn estuary is formed by three great groups of rivers: (1) The Severn itself. (2) The English group, those on the right-hand bank, represented by the Avon, Brue, and Parret fishery district, and some of the Devonshire streams. (3) The South Wales streams from the Wye to the Cleddy. Probably in early times all these streams contributed to the common stock. Now the English group breed no salmon, but catch a few of the fish on their way up in fixed engines, and some sea-trout run up the Parret and the Devonshire streams. But on the Welsh side of the estuary, the Wye and the Usk contribute a large number of salmon, and although between the mouth of the Usk and the Worm's Head the rivers yield but little, chiefly from pollution, yet a few salmon and some sea-trout are found in such of the rivers as are not too polluted for fish to live in them. After the Worm's Head is past, the Carmarthen Bay group of rivers contribute both salmon and sewin, as do the Pembrokeshire streams. Thus the state of things at the top of the estuary is that the Usk, Wye, and Severn produce more salmon than sea-trout, the English group produce a few sea-trout, and the Carmarthen Bay group produce both salmon and sea-trout.

The next point to note is that such salmon as are caught in the fixed engines at the mouth of the Parret in Bridgwater Bay are, as a rule, large fish. The precise figures for a series of years are not available, but those that are show that in Bridgwater Bay more salmon are taken than grilse. It is not contended that grilse and sea-trout are not taken on this side the estuary; they certainly are, but the proportion of grilse compared with the whole catch is small. How far it is safe to draw any conclusion from this fact, the numbers being so small, may be doubtful; but it does not seem an unfair inference that, as far as the evidence goes, mature salmon keep to the English side of the estuary. On the Welsh side far more fish are caught; but,



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CHAFFINCH.

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unfortunately, there are no complete or reliable returns of the proportion of grilse to the whole take in any of the Carmarthen Bay streams. All that can be said is that the salmon there are small, and it is the exception to get a fish over 20lb. Anyone who has studied the soundings of the Severn estuary knows that a line drawn from the Worm's Head to, say, Caldy Island comprises inside it a number of banks furnishing splendid feeding-grounds for fish, and that this is an area of shallow water. The deep channel goes down the English side of the estuary under the Somerset and North Devon shore. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge as to how far the smolts that return as grilse go out to sea, nor if the mature salmon go further afield than the immature fish; but we have these facts: (1) That in the channel that leads out to the deep sea the salmon that are taken are mainly mature salmon. (2) That on the Welsh side of the estuary the salmon that are caught are smaller in size (it is not known if they are grilse or not) than those taken on the other side. (3) That the water on the Welsh side is shallower, and abounds in shoals and banks where immature fish would naturally resort. It would not be right to say from this that the immature fish go to the shallow side of the estuary, and the mature to the deep; but it is a point on which it is most important that reliable evidence should be collected. What I venture to put forward is that the smolts descend the Severn to the large feeding-grounds in Carmarthen Bay. Probably they always did this, so that in this respect there is no change from what has gone on for ages; but the point to be settled is at what time do they leave their feeding-grounds to return to the river. Here is where the change has taken place. There is nothing to lead to the belief that the smolts require less time to become grilse than they formerly did, and it may be assumed that the time they spend in salt water is substantially the same as it was. It is groping in the dark, for there is nothing to show the length of that time nor on what it really depends. It is, in the absence of any evidence, only reasonable to suppose that the primary factor is food, and that the stay of the fish in the sea is to some extent dependent on that. There is nothing to lead to the belief that the supply of food has materially fallen off in this area, so it may be assumed it remains practically the same as before. Therefore the length of time necessary for the fish to stay to turn from smolts to grilse remains the same. If the time is a fairly fixed period, has there been any alteration in its beginning or ending? Here is where the change comes in. There can be no doubt that there has been a very great alteration in the time when the smolts descend the Severn to the sea. Formerly the largest quantity—practically all—went down in April, May, and June. Now it is not so; some go down then, but from various causes, which it would be out of place to consider here, the spring migration of smolts is not now the largest. A large number go down in the autumn, and it may be taken as a fact that can be proved by evidence that the smolts descend to the sea at times other than those at which they formerly did. If, therefore, the smolt requires a fixed time in the salt water before he develops into a grilse, and the

beginning of that time is altered, it follows that the end must also be altered; so it would be impossible for the fish to return as grilse to the Severn in June, July, and August, as they are not ready to do so, not having been long enough in the sea to become grilse.

This, therefore, seems to suggest an answer to the first part of the question, What has become of the Severn grilse? They are not taken during the open season, because they are not there to take; a smolt to become a grilse requires a certain time (what time is uncertain) in salt water. The length of that time has not been altered, but the beginning of it has; so probably must be the end, since grilse do not appear at the time they used to do. This sounds plausible, but there are a number of objections to it. The first and great one is, Do the grilse come at other times of the year to the Severn? and to this the answer must be emphatically no. If only some grilse were caught in the spring, this theory would be almost established; but the fact that none is caught before June prevents its acceptance as a complete explanation. It is also very difficult to say that the grilse return during the autumn months, as there are no means of proving what the fish in the river are during the close time. Doubtless small fish are seen on the spawning-beds, and these may be grilse; but it is not safe to assume it, particularly in face of such evidence as there is to the contrary. In the Severn estuary, both during the open season and the close time, fish are continually stranded on the sands by the ebbing tide. One of the duties of the water bailiffs is to look after these fish and keep a record of them. The record shows to some extent of what different runs of salmon consist at the different times of the year. If there was a run of grilse, doubtless some would be found; but the records show nothing like a run of grilse. It is quite the exception to have even one recorded. This fact seems to tell very strongly against the view that the scarcity of grilse during the fishing season is due to an alteration of the time of their returning to the river. Unfortunately, the returns for the Wye and Usk as to grilse are not available, as they would probably throw some light on the subject, especially as to whether this absence of grilse only exists on the Severn, or whether it also extends to the neighbouring rivers. If it does, then it must be some cause common to all three; if it does not, some cause only applicable to the Severn exists.

At present, the matter is one which calls for further examination and further evidence; but the difficulty is to get this. If some system of regular observation of the habits of salmon in the estuary could only be instituted, much might be learnt. This was one of the things that the late Royal Commission on Salmon Fisheries insisted upon most strongly, but, like all the recommendations of that Commission, it has been neglected. Except making some attempt to mark salmon—an attempt that has not, so far, added much to our knowledge—the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries have done no more towards advancing the knowledge of fish-life than was done by the Home Office or Board of Trade. Is it too much to hope that the new President will take some steps to ascertain, as far as possible, the life history of the grilse?

J. W. WILLIS-BUND.

## PEDIGREE STOCK AT GREAT AISH.

ANYBODY connected with agriculture cannot fail to be interested in Great Aish, the farm owned and cultivated by that well-known and energetic husbandman, Mr. John R. Kingwell. He is one of the finest representatives of his class whom we have ever had the good fortune to meet, and he does not confine his interests by any means to business, but gives a generous portion of his time to public affairs. He is a justice of the peace, and one of the chief organisers in several useful local movements. It is, however,

with him as a farmer that we are concerned to day, and our first reflection is that he is fortunate to have so exquisite a place in which

to carry out his operations. Great Aish consists of several hundreds of fruitful and fertile acres. Most of the land lies low, and is well watered by the Avon, which wimples gracefully through Mr. Kingwell's fields. At the back of this smiling homestead, however, lies Dartmoor, with its great stretches of gorse and bracken, a wonder to behold in the merry springtime, when the yellow flowers are showing like gold and the



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GENERAL BULLER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

white blossoms are beginning to break on the hawthorn—that is to say, a time of the year just a few weeks later than the date on which our photographs were taken. The appearance of Dartmoor is stern and almost forbidding, at least to anyone who thinks chiefly of its capacity for feeding cattle. We need not say that for the lover of Nature the moorland has many exquisite winter charms. When the withered bracken is silvered with hoar frost and glitters back to the moonbeams that seem doubly bright here, no one would think of denying that Dartmoor is beautiful, even in December; and when spring begins to make the fern-fronds uncurl again and calls forth the vivid green of the early grass, it is lovely indeed. Dartmoor, of course, belongs to the Duchy of Lancaster, but Mr. Kingwell enjoys grazing rights on it. This, no doubt, is the making of the famous ponies, of which he keeps a large stock, and with true Devonian belief in the moorland he thinks that all the live creatures on the farm benefit much from having an occasional but full taste of the fresh winds that blow so freely over it. It is rather a common saying in the neighbourhood that good farming consists largely in knowing when to turn the stock out and when to bring them in, the usual course being to let them out in May and bring them in about the middle of October. Mr. Kingwell is in the habit of giving his bullocks and sheep only a short run on the moor for the purpose of strengthening and hardening their constitution; but the serious feeding, it is scarcely necessary to say, is done on the splendid meadow-land of the farm. Needless to say, he has studied the effects very carefully, and particularly with regard to sheep, for it has been his object for many years to develop the Dartmoor. Its original character was that of a mountain sheep, that is to say, it was small in joint, but with a flavour not inferior to that of Welsh or Cheviot mutton. It was active and hardy in its habits, and could be easily kept; but from the farmer's point of view it did not carry enough either of meat or of wool, and so the aim of Mr. Kingwell has been to improve these qualities. There were two courses open to him—those of crossing, and of selection for breeding purposes. With the Cheviots in the North of England



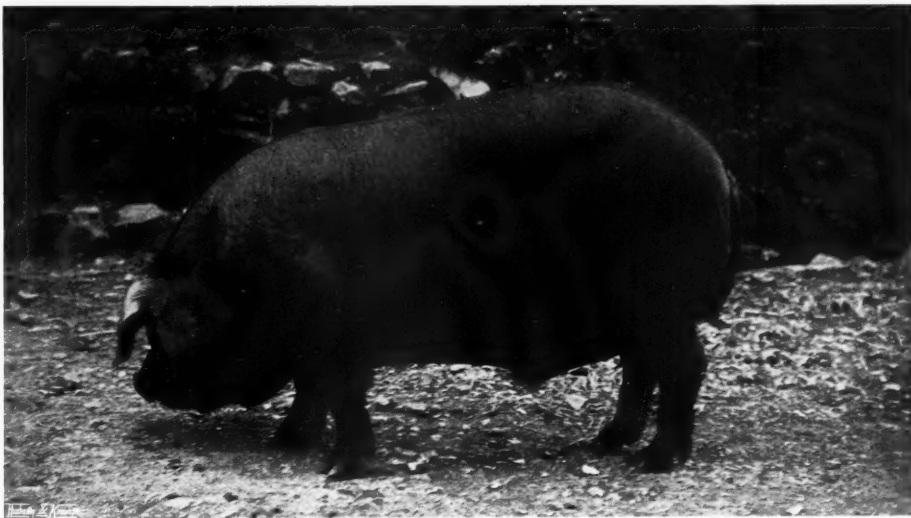
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A PROMISING YOUNG SOW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the former alternative has been tried with great success for generations, and the half-bred Border Leicester is now a recognised type of sheep. Mr. Kingwell did not follow this method, and, under the circumstances in which he was placed, was probably right, because the breed under his hands has attained to fame and distinction. The sheep of Dartmoor is generally assumed to be

one of the oldest breeds in England, and, as has happened in so many other places, it has during the course of ages adapted itself to the ground. Many of the farmers have tried crossing with Leicesters and Lincolns, but by doing so they have produced a sheep that is no longer one of the "ugly old Dartmoors" referred to by Youatt. Mr. Kingwell himself says of the sheep, "They are very hardy in constitution, with heavy, lean flesh and



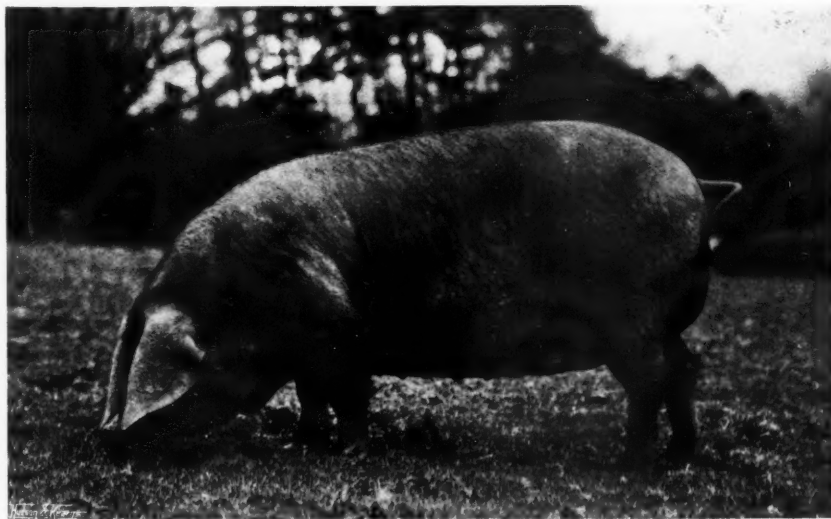
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TRESCOWE PRIDE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

plenty of bone. My flock have averaged for the past three years over 14lb. of wool each (of course, omitting the lambs)." No doubt it is to exposure to the winter Dartmoor weather that they owe their strong, hardy constitution, and to conserve this hardiness has been one of Mr. Kingwell's aims in breeding. "In the ideal Dartmoor sheep," he says, "the loin should be broad, well covered with lean flesh; the neck massive, and sprung well from the shoulders; the ears thick, and well covered with smooth, clean hair (if a few black spots on them, so much the better); the face should be large and broad, eyes full and bright, and nostrils black and broad." The pictures which we show will give a very fair idea of the stamp of sheep to those who have not previously come across a flock.

It seems to have been partly due to accident that Mr. Kingwell took to showing pigs. He says himself that one day, going to a show and having an empty crate, he thought he might as well put something in it, and took one of the pigs previously kept for domestic purposes, and to his surprise it won the championship; and this was how he made his *début* in the show-yard. The old Devon black pig, in the days before exhibition was quite common, and before breeding had been made into a fine art, had more of the greyhound shape than it enjoys at present. It is described as having been tall and lanky, richer in bone than



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THE OFFSPRING OF GENERAL BULLER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



in flesh; but when the breeders took them in hand they got rid of these characteristics. The pig, even at this day, is not a large one, but still it is in size greater than used to be the case, and the big bones seem to have shrunk a little while the flesh has increased. Of course, the pig is by nature of a hardy and strong constitution. It was the cottage pig of Devonshire, and, therefore, has not been pampered into delicacy. Of the pig it may be said, as of the sheep, that it belongs to the country and has been developed in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, and gives the best results there. Mr. Kingwell, or rather his son Mr. Henry Kingwell, who takes the chief management of the pigs, has the utmost faith in their qualities. They are of a happy disposition, and not being accustomed to fret over things, take life easily and grow fat with a charming felicity. They have long ears that, drooping over their eyes, prevent them from seeing many things that might cause them to worry, or at any rate might distract their attention from the one serious business



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LAMB, RAM, AND WETHER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

has taken the fancy of many farmers away from Devon, and has been introduced into Norfolk, Suffolk, and Kent, while there is a



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EWES AND LAMBS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of their lives, which is to lay on bacon. They mature very quickly, and when killed at six months old give a long, deep-sided carcase, with a large proportion of lean meat. The breed

continued demand from abroad. It may be useful to add a few words about our pictures. In regard to pigs, a summary of some of the honours won by Mr. Kingwell will show the aptness



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A DARTMOOR SIRE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of the illustrations. General Buller, the old boar of the stud, is naturally a source of pride to the owner, and, indeed, he is an almost perfect specimen of the Large Black. He shows seven feet of pig if you measure from snout to tail, showing the immense length of the Large Black, while an examination of our photographs will show the depth of body and the character of the joints. General Buller was sire to the first pen of sow pigs at last year's Royal Show, their dam being Cornwood Lass VI. Mr. Kingwell and his son look forward with confidence to a successful season in the show-ring this year. The three year old boar, Trescowe Pride, sired by Hendre Pride, is a recent purchase. This pig took honours last year at Park Royal, and it is believed that its introduction into the herd will strengthen the best characteristics of the Large Blacks at Great Aish. With his Dartmoor sheep Mr. Kingwell took first prize at last year's Royal Show with Brent Sammy, second with Brent Tip-Top, and reserve with Brent Up-to-Date, whilst he swept the board with his three pens of



shearling ewes. In 1904 Brent Up-to-Date took first prize at Park Royal, Tip-Top was second, and Brent Star third. In 1903 almost the same tale of success must be recorded; and there can be no question that the Great Aish flock of Dartmoors is the finest in Devon.

The picture of a ram lamb, a ram, and a wether ought to interest our readers. It is not only that the ram and the sire are very good typical examples of their kind, but it will be seen that the budding horns of the wether point to a cast back to some remote ancestor among the ugly Dartmoor sheep, to which reference has already been made. These signs will make their appearance now and again even in the most carefully-bred flock, showing how difficult it is to eradicate ancient characteristics by selection carried over many generations of sheep. Probably, if the herds were turned to graze wild on the moor and left entirely to themselves they would in the course of a few generations revert to the original type. Needless to say, this is a very unlikely occurrence to take place. The Dartmoor sheep of to-day is the result of the exertion of enterprise, study, and patience spread over a long series of years. It has become much more serviceable to the breeder than could have been dreamt of by the most sanguine of the old flock-masters, yet it can only be kept in that position by unending care.



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THREE WEEKS OLD. 'COUNTRY LIFE.'

## IN THE GARDEN.

### NEWLY-PLANTED TREES AND SHRUBS.

AS these notes are written a little in advance of publication, it is impossible to give directions that will apply at the moment. The weather may be wet or fine, cold or hot, or a mixture of both; but this we do know, that unless copious rains have refreshed plant-life in the garden, artificial waterings are a necessity. Our experience on a hilltop garden is the reverse of pleasant during periods of drought. The sun shines pitilessly on thirsty vegetation, and we see even the young leaves hanging limp and tired in the heat of the day. A small orchard was planted last autumn, and though the trees were mulched with well-decayed manure, it has been necessary to give plenty of water to the roots to prevent any possible collapse. Apple trees seem more affected than plums, pears, and cherries, and Cox's Orange Pippin is in sore straits; but we hope for the best. Of course, we do not allow grass to approach within 3ft. clear of the stems, and we advise those with trees in grassland to do likewise. A thorough inspection should be made of all trees and shrubs planted last autumn. It is a critical time in their life when a dry spring and early summer follow planting, and only mulchings with manure and plenty of water will save them.

### RANDOM NOTES.

*The Sweet Violet in the Garden.*—No sweeter flower exists than the little white Violet of warm hedgerow and fringing wood. Its shy little flowers are everywhere in the garden of the writer, and we encourage its increase in the banks and meadow, where they scent the winds of spring with a fragrance sweeter even than the tall Pansy-like Princess of Wales Violet in the cold frame. The well-known writer, "E. V. B.," in a paper read before the Royal Horticultural Society, says: "In February and March the whole garden is white with them in every part, and in the grass at the north-east end and under the Apple trees you would almost think there had been a hailstorm, so white and thick the white Violets lie." An American writer on "Nature and the Garden," prizes "the English single Violets, both white and purple, more than any of our native species, both because they are earlier than ours, and because they are so delightfully fragrant, while ours are, with one exception, scentless. The fragile-looking, single white English Violet grows wild in our shady grove, and spreads quite freely, even in poor, uncultivated soil. It is quite hardy here."

*Daffodils in Grass.*—We are much dissatisfied with the growth of the Daffodils this year in the grass. Bulbs planted two years ago last autumn are disappearing, and it is evidently necessary to renew them yearly to maintain a display. It is interesting to notice the difference between those in the grass and those in the border. The bulbs planted last autumn in the grass are flourishing, a group of Golden Spur being as fine as anything we have seen this spring in the way of Daffodils, but next spring we expect the flowers will have decreased in size with many bulbs. This experience is gained on a dry, gravelly soil, but we well remember in cool alluvial meadows in Sussex, the colonies of Daffodils increased in vigour with age. After all, it is a matter of position and soil, and a flower that delights its owner in one garden disappoints him in another.

*Planting the Bamboo.*—The best season of the year for planting the Bamboo has arrived, and as this beautiful grass grows in favour year by year it will be helpful to give a few general directions for its cultivation. Lord Redesdale, who is the authority on the Bamboo, says in his book, "The Bamboo Garden," that "a rich, warm spot with partial shade and a good screen on the north and east, especially under the influence of sea air, is the true home of the Bamboo. Sea mists bring moisture to the leaves and are Nature's syringe. Nothing revives the plants more thoroughly, or more effectually

brings out their brilliancy, which is one of their characteristics. The worst living enemies of the plants, especially of the dwarf species, appear to be the rats and voles, which will burrow under the wire-netting and gnaw through the stems in order to carry away the leaves for linings to their nests. . . . Above all things I would warn my readers against planting out imported Bamboos in their permanent places before they have recovered from the effects of the journey. . . . The plants should only travel during the period when they are at rest. They will be received, therefore, during the late autumn or winter. If they have come from abroad, the balls of earth round the roots should be thoroughly soaked; they should then be potted and placed in a cool house for the winter. The leaves, or bare culms if the leaves be lost, should be copiously syringed twice

a day, but the roots should not be kept too wet; in this way many spears will keep their leaves as green and fresh as if they had never been disturbed. As regards the transplanting of established clumps from one part of the garden to another, *not for sending them on a journey*, this is an operation which is best undertaken in May or June, when the new shoots first show signs of life." The most beautiful Bamboos are *Phyllostachys Henonsis*, *P. Mitis*, *P. Quiloi*, *P. viridi-glaucescens*, *Arundinaria japonica*, or *Bambusa Metake*, as it is also called, *B. palmata* (dwarf), and *B. pygmaea* (dwarf).

*The Value of Manures.*—If the soil is very poor it should be liberally manured. Plants must be fed if they are to give either an abundance of flowers or a profitable crop. All the manures used, no matter whether they be animal or vegetable (such as rotten leaves), or mineral (such as guano, nitrate of soda, kainit, salt, etc.), must be easy to dissolve when brought into contact with the moisture of the air and earth. Thus, there are what are termed soluble manures—that is, those which soon or in a few months, become dissolved. Insoluble manures are such as bones in an unbroken state; yet bones broken up fine or steamed soft become first-rate plant food. In laying out the garden, and its immediate after management, this question of manuring is of the first importance. If animal manure is to be obtained we prefer it to any artificial or chemical compound. When using the manure it must always be half decayed and moist at the time of applying it to the soil, and long strawy manures have little value. The best time to manure is the autumn or winter, and on wet soil. Two wheelbarrow-loads should go to a rod of ground, but everything, of course, depends upon the quality of the soil. Chemical manures should be used at the rate of 6lb. to the same area of ground. Chemical manures comprise phosphate made from softened bones, or the powder known as basic slag. Potash comes from kainit and other salts dug from the earth. Nitrogen comes from nitrate of soda. Sulphate of ammonia is obtained in the making of coal gas and from other things. The best way to obtain these manures is to purchase each one in a raw state from the merchants and mix them to form a complete manure. The proportions should be as follows: Phosphate 4lb., kainit 2lb., and nitrate 2lb. Generally the rule is to mix the first two only, and apply them when the soil is dug or forked over in the winter, adding the nitrate after the crop has made some growth, and hoeing it in immediately. Lime may be given at the rate of half a bushel per rod to wet, sour, or clogged soil. Soot is beneficial at any season.

*Saving the Finest Primroses.*—We have reviled amongst the Primroses this year, many of the varieties having given the colours we so much desire—strong shades of crimson and red. One variety we have placed apart from the others, and this, we think, will prove worthy of a distinct name, possessing all the attributes of a fine garden flower. It is more of the Polyanthus type, holding its stem erect, and has a head of deep crimson colouring with yellow centre, a bright and unusual contrast. The seed must be sown in the middle of May, and the seedlings kept in a place by themselves. The only way to obtain a good selection is by weeding out all the poor forms. It was by this patient process that Miss Jekyll obtained the beautiful Bunch Primroses, which form one of the glories of the Munstead garden in spring.

*Preparing for Summer.*—The year is hurrying on, and it will soon be time to plant out the things that have been chosen to adorn the summer garden. Calceolarias may be planted out late in April and about the middle of May, not earlier; plant out the Dahlias, Zonal Pelargoniums, better known as Geraniums, Ageratums, Cannas, and the usual tender plants that have matured during the spring in the warm frame or greenhouse. It is most important at the present time to give them as much air as possible, to encourage a firm, well-ripened growth. A tender plant should never go direct to the open air without this hardening process. Even in May the weather is changeable, and sometimes unpleasantly so, and its effect upon soft, sappy growth is at once apparent. The Primroses, Polyanthuses, Arabis, Aubrietia, and other spring flowers will soon have to be lifted from the beds in which they now are to make room for the summer flowers. The greatest care should be taken in the removal, and the plants transferred to the reserve ground. We have a large plot set apart for this purpose. It is the shadiest part of the garden, to give the Primroses and Polyanthuses in particular suitable summer conditions, which may be summed up in moisture and partial shade from hot summer sun. One tender plant we use in quantity—the blue *Salvia patens*, the bluest of blue flowers. We always have a large bed of this, and plant it with the Night-scented Tobacco. We wish readers of these notes would describe for the benefit of others any pretty colour schemes which they may have had in their own gardens or seen in others. Such notes would be most helpful.

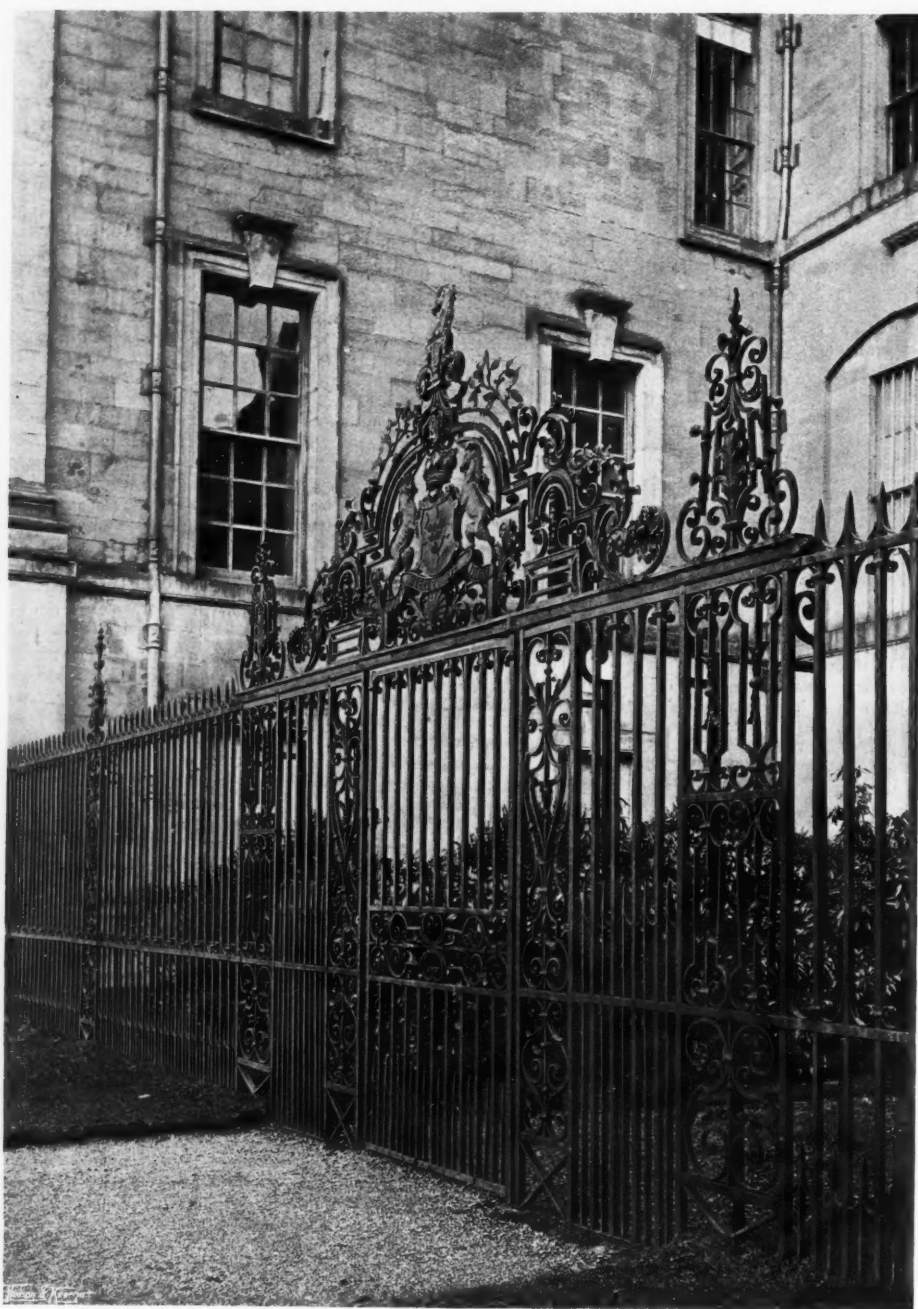


**A**S a house of religious Stoneleigh was founded long since, in the middle of the twelfth century, when William the abbot and his Cistercian monks came from Staffordshire and settled here where the little river of Sow flows to the water of Avon, building those walls, some of whose round-headed doorways still remain. The history of Stoneleigh is that of many of the lesser abbeys. It tugged for its rights with those who would invade them, had charters under

the broad seal, and confirmations of those charters. Its abbots nursed the house's revenues, or scattered them in waste; observed its rule or broke it. Truly scandal was here in the reign of King Edward III., when of Thomas the abbot it was said that the abbey harboured more of his children by the fair Isabel Benshall than it had monks. The end of the abbeys came, and Stoneleigh fell at the first blast, being amongst those lesser houses suppressed as having less than £200 of yearly rents. Its few monks found other shelter, and Thomas Tutbury, the abbot, had a life pension.

The abbey of Stoneleigh, with its lands, came by the royal grant to the royal brother-in-law, that stout knight Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, whose great suit of plate in the Tower of London has drawn from many generations of Tower warders the remark that the Dook was a tidy-sized man to sit upon a horse. The traditional curse of the abbey lands fell presently upon Charles Brandon, his two sons dying issueless, and his great possessions being divided among his cousins and heirs. To William Cavendish of Trimley was allotted the site of the late monastery of Stoneleigh, which he conveyed by fine in the third year of Elizabeth to two London knights—Sir Rowland Hill and Sir Thomas Leigh, citizens and aldermen, great purchasers of lands. In Stoneleigh Sir Thomas Leigh came to be sole lord. He had bought the greater part of the lands in this large parish, and had a patent confirming them to him with the manor of Stoneleigh. He had been bred under old Sir Rowland, whom he had served as his factor beyond sea, and Sir Rowland, having no child of his own, matched his niece, Alice Barker, *alias* Coverdale, with his young factor, to whom she brought a great fortune and the manor of King's Newnham. She died very old in 1603, nearly seventy years after her wedding, the almshouses at Stoneleigh commemorating her.

Sir Thomas Leigh was a great merchant in an age of many and adventurous merchants. He was a scion of an ancient house that had been settled in Cheshire before the Conquest. One of his ancestors, Sir Piers, had been standard bearer to Edward the Black Prince at the battle of Crecy; another, Sir Peter, had fallen at Agincourt. But Thomas, as was often the case with younger sons in those days, turned his thoughts to commerce, and beginning life as a mercer's apprentice, was free of the city in 1526, and whilst still a young man had dealings with the King's treasury. He was a merchant-adventurer and merchant of the staple, three times master of the mercers, alderman and sheriff, and Lord Mayor in the first year of Elizabeth, who knighted him then. The mercers have still the fair covered-cup of silver-gilt he gave them by his



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THE CREST OF THE LEIGHS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."





STONELEIGH ABBEY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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will, a cup with the hall-mark of 1499-1500. He was buried in the Company's chapel, where his epitaph's rime recited that

Sir Thomas Leigh in civil life  
All offices did beare,  
Which in this city worshipfull  
Or honourable were.  
Whom as God blessed with great wealth  
So losses did he feelee,  
Yet never chang'd he constant mind  
Tho' Fortune turned her wheel.

He left a long family, the house reaching its highest rank in a descendant of his third son. This third line had for its provision the lands of King's Newnham, where, to Sir Francis Leigh, a Knight of the Bath and an antiquary with Spelman, Cotton, and Camden, there was born of Mary his wife, daughter of the great Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, a son, Francis Leigh. This younger

Francis, baronet in 1618, supported the Court in Parliament, and was Lord Dunsmore and Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners in 1628. He is remembered as a froward and violent man, a courtier rather than a soldier. Lord Brooke's men from Coventry killed his Newnham venison, and he paid a large sum to redeem his estates, but he had an earl's coronet for his consolation, dying Earl of Chichester.

From Rowland Leigh, the old merchant's eldest son, come the Lords Leigh of the last creation. An earlier line of peers was founded at Stoneleigh by the second son of old Sir Thomas. This second son, Sir Thomas, the younger, was a baronet in 1611, the first year of the baronetage, being one of the batch of fifty-six created on June 29th. He was succeeded at Stoneleigh by his grandson, Sir Thomas, the only son of an only son. This was a cavalier sheriff of Warwickshire and member for the county, who opened the gates of Stoneleigh to his King when



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WEST CORNER OF SALOON.

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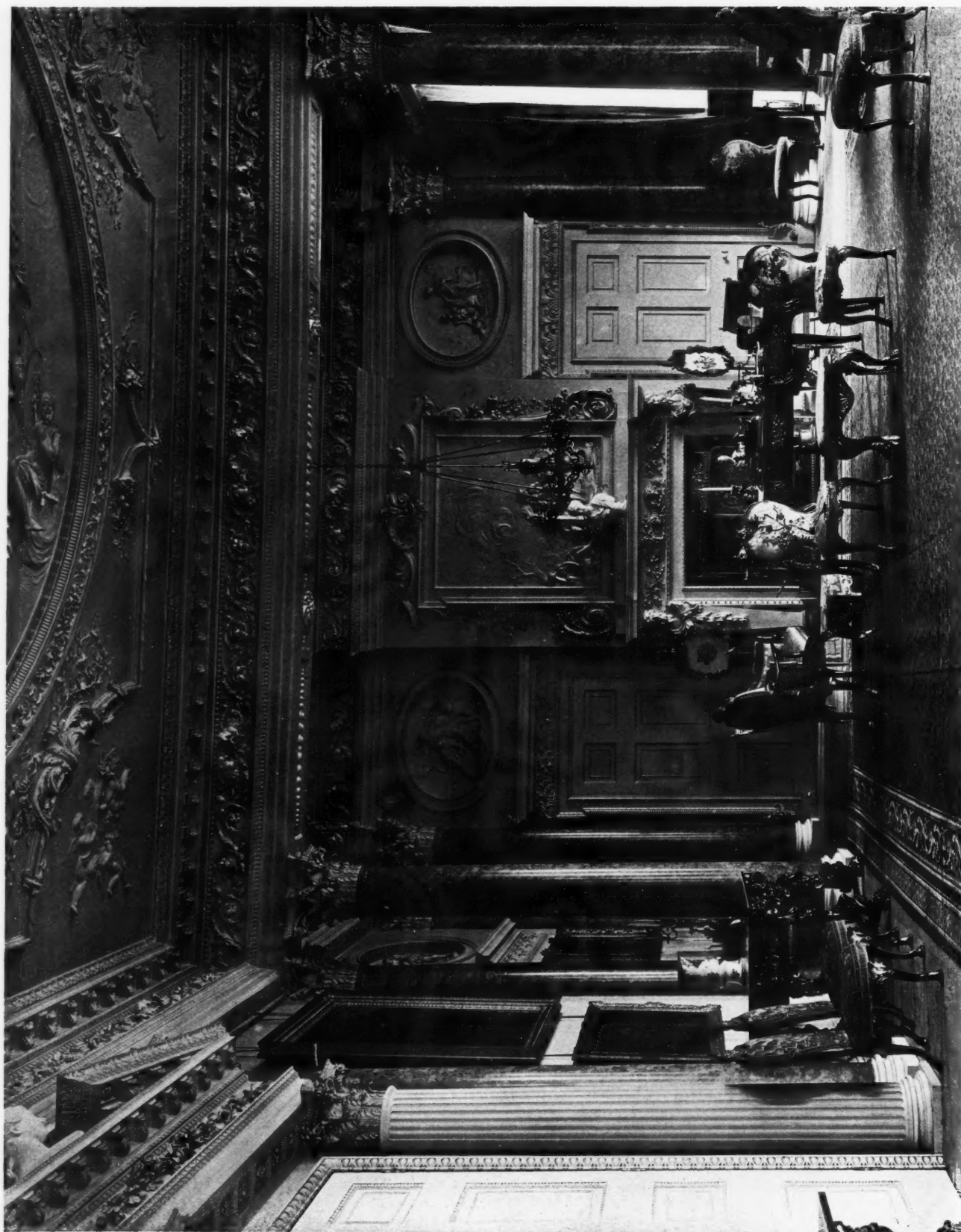
WESTERN CHIMNEY-PIECE, SALOON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Coventry had refused him entry. An Oxford patent of 1643 made the loyalist Lord Leigh of Stoneleigh. He compounded and saved his lands, living to see royalty restored. The last Lord Leigh sprung from him died unmarried in 1786, devising his estates in favour of his sisters and their children, with a remainder which in 1806 carried Stoneleigh to the nearest male heir of his name and blood, his distant cousin, James Henry Leigh of Adlestrop.

The new heir of Stoneleigh was sixth in descent from Rowland Leigh, eldest son of the great merchant-adventurer. A pupil of Isaac Hunt, the young Leigh Hunt was named after him, and when he succeeded he had already the beautiful seat of Adlestrop in Gloucestershire. His mother was sister of the last

of the Dukes of Chandos, granddaughter of the "princely Chandos" whose bubble palace at Edgware was so strangely destroyed at his death. In Chandos Leigh, his son, the peerage was revived. One of the young Liberals of the Holland House circle, he was friend to Sheridan and to Byron, whose school-fellow he was at Harrow. Chandos Leigh's name is attached to the "Island of Love" and other volumes of verse, and in this odd company on the bookshelf stands his pamphlet on the Corn Law, urging farmers to meet competition by improving their methods. He died in 1850, his body being brought home to Stoneleigh from Bonn. His son, the second lord, was buried near him last year in the old church amongst the tombs of the Leighs, whose most curious monument

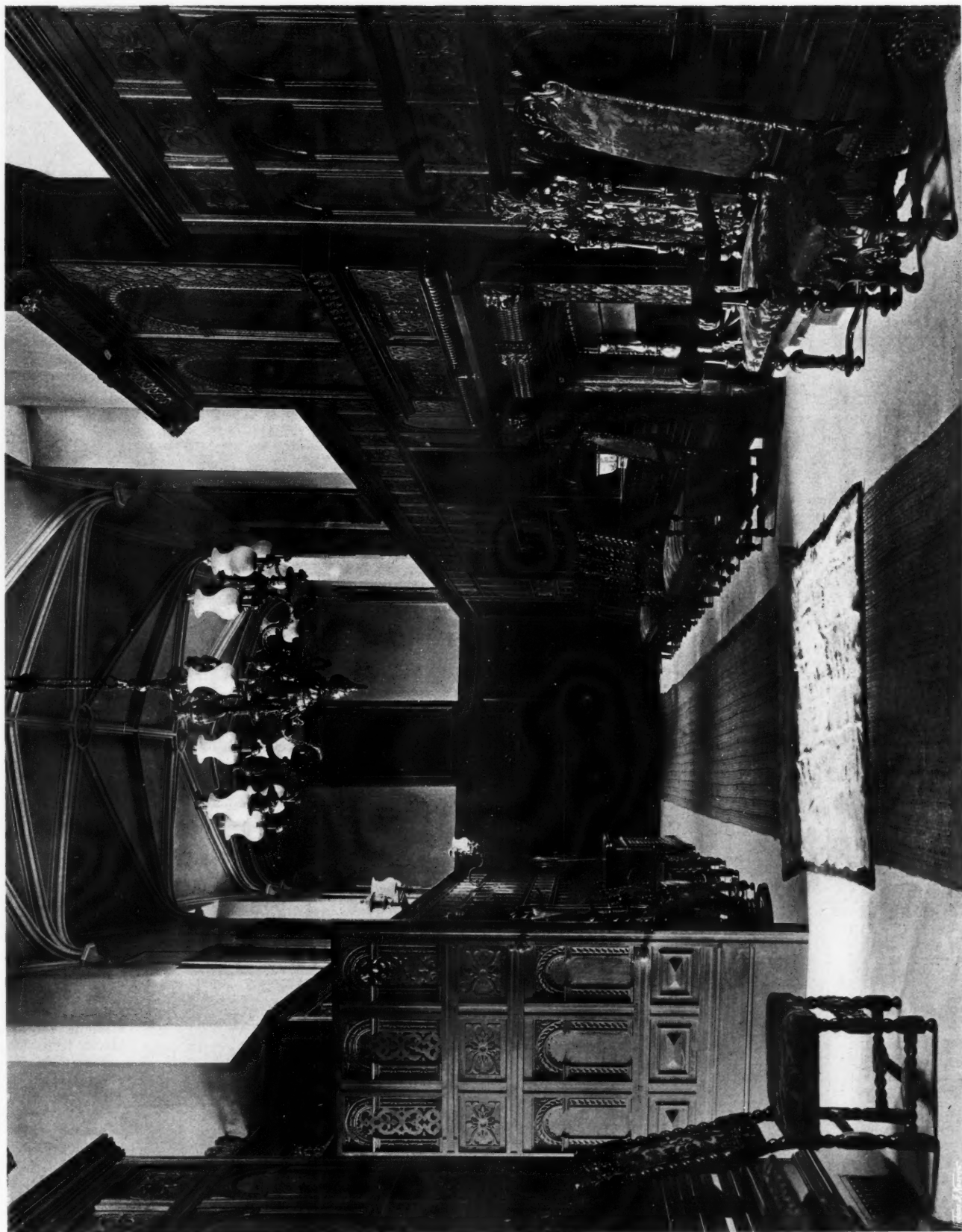


"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE SALOON.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

ENTRANCE HALL.



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"COUNTRY LIFE."

commemorates Alice Leigh, a daughter of the first Stoneleigh baronet and wife of Sir Robert Dudley the exile, the cast-off son of Elizabeth's favourite Leicester. Left here in England by her husband, who had remarried in his Italian home, King Charles found time in the midst of his troubles to grant her at Oxford a patent under which she was created Duchess Dudley in England for her life, a remarkable document which recites that the King knew not the truth of the tangled story of her husband's birth, but had a very deep sense of the injuries done to Sir Robert and Dame Alice.

The road to Stoneleigh Abbey crosses the river and runs under the old fourteenth century gatehouse of the monks, with the arms of Henry II. upon it. Of the abbey itself traces remain in Norman doorways and a vaulted crypt; to these are joined portions of the old mansion of the Leighs, planned in the early seventeenth century. But the chief part of the house is the great block of the Italian palace, built about 1720 for Edward, the fifth Lord Leigh, by Smith, the architect of Umberslade. It is a pile of three storeys, the wings thrust forward, with long Ionic

pilasters among the tiers of windows supporting a deep cornice and balustrade. The north-western angle is joined to the older house by a corridor, believed to be the site of the abbey's south aisle. Here there is an entry through a modern vestibule. The inlaid chimney-piece in this corridor was brought from Fletchamstead Hall, and our picture shows the details of several tall-backed chairs of the late seventeenth century, covered with gilt leather and embroidery. Over the library mantel-piece is the Philips portrait of Lord Byron, and eighteen miniatures in two frames. The amber-coloured upholstery of the great saloon recalls Queen Victoria's visit to Stoneleigh, and upon the walls

an Italian sculptor has carved in relief medallions of the labours of Hercules, the taming of the boar and the slaying of the lion, while in a broad panel over the western chimney-piece, the hero, leaning on his club, chooses between Pallas and Aphrodite. On the walls of the velvet drawing-room will be seen the pictures of the house founders, old Sir Thomas Leigh and Dame Alice his wife, in close coat and small ruff, each painted in their seventieth year. Near these are a Venetian scene by Canaletto and the fair



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## A SUMMER-HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



shoulders of one of Lely's ladies. The rich marqueterie cabinet of china will also be remarked. The handsome ironwork of the gates is dated by the arms of Edward, fifth Lord Leigh, the builder of the new house, and those of his wife, a Holbech of Fillongley.

## BATTERSEA FIELDS IN THE FORTIES.

**B**ATTERSEA FIELDS, as I knew them in the early forties, included that portion of the land upon the Surrey side of the Thames lying between the Bridge Road, Battersea, on the west, and Nine Elms on the east, and between the Thames on the north, and the Wandsworth Road on the south. Between the last-mentioned road and the "fields" proper were situated one or two small farms, which were known as Longhedge, Lachmere, and Matson's farms; but they were all included under the names of Battersea

House stood, a spot where Mr. Osbaldiston and the sporting gentlemen of the time shot off their pigeon matches. The paths leading to the Red House were rather intricate, owing to the number of reed-grown pools, which met the pedestrian at every point; but the said paths were well covered by a thick coating of "slag" by the proprietor of the Red House. Upon the occasion of a notable pigeon-shooting match, the unemployed from Wandsworth, Battersea, Chelsea, Westminster, and other neighbouring towns would spend the day in "scouting," and bringing down those pigeons which the marksmen in the wooden enclosure failed to grass in the contests. Rifle-shooting and pistol practice were carried on daily, while the ring of the iron targets from the leaden hail could be heard at a great distance. The Red House was a by-word in men's mouths, and it stood about 500yds. below the spot where the suspension bridge crosses the Thames, and about 200yds. from the river bank. At the end of the forties an enterprising builder erected a large public-house on the bank—the British Flag—where during the week, and especially on Saturdays and Sundays, an extensive trade was carried on in refreshments for the inner man. Not far from the Red



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STONELEIGH ABBEY: THE VELVET DRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Fields, or Battersea Marsh. They were the favourite haunts of exploring collectors for the acquiring of specimen plants, with which this region abounded, and on account of the numerous kinds of beautiful butterflies which were to be found in the district. The whole marsh, or low-lying portion, was part of an immense tract of swampy country, which fringed the southern bank of the river from Wandsworth to Woolwich, a tract of land that was surveyed by Maitland, in his desire to discover a ford, by taking soundings in the Thames, in September, 1732. The fields proper, *i.e.*, those in the proximity of the southern bank, were intersected by dykes, or ditches, which received the high tides of the Thames from an inlet near the western extremity. The dykes were all reed-grown, and they were the favourite haunts of snipe and waterfowl. The meadows, if such we may call them, were always covered by grass of a beautiful deep green tint, no doubt resulting from the constant supply of the tidal water from the river. There was a path by the river-side, which reached from the Bridge Road, at Battersea, to the main road leading to Nine Elms. Where the Victoria Bridge now stands there was a long incline which led to the enclosed ground, where the old Red

House, but more to the westward, occurred the famous duel between the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchelsea, the cause of which was the publishing of a letter in the *Standard* newspaper. Fortunately, no serious consequence ensued, for the Earl fired in the air, and afterwards retracted the charge which he had made against his noble antagonist.

Every year, when Battersea held its big pleasure fair, such an assemblage was gathered together that the entire fields were thronged. The Romany tribes were very much in evidence, and they brought with them the usual paraphernalia of the gipsy gatherings, booths, merry-go-rounds, cocoanuts, and horses—the last named being merely skin and bone, which, if used in the present day, would bring down upon the owners the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with a vengeance! The poor animals were destined to spend the whole of the day, from noon, in running races, for which exercise the brutal jockeys paid the sum of one penny. There were booths for pugilists, who displayed their mangled features and herculean proportions after the usual set-to inside, which generally lasted about five minutes. Prick-in-the-garter, thimble-rig, cards, and dice were plentiful;

but shooting for nuts, shying at cocoanuts, and pitch-at-the-mot were the games that enticed the juvenile London sportsmen, and cleaned them out to the last penny. Every man did what was right in his own eyes, for there were no policemen to see that order was kept. On Sunday mornings, during the summer, pugilistic encounters would be as plentiful as blackberries. My home was immediately opposite the most level parts of the field. From about 6.30 a.m. to eight it was our custom to look out from the barges moored to our wharf, and if we saw any boats making for the Battersea shore, we jumped into the skiff which was always on hand, and rowed gently over the river. At first we were challenged and ordered back; but, when they came to know us, we were suffered to look on. If any policeman came, the ropes and stakes were pulled up, and a move was made to the "barons," a spot just above Cremorne, and there the men fought to a finish. Genuine battles they were, probably originating in some dispute at one of the flash houses of Pimlico or in the Haymarket. Kangaroo, a denizen of the last-mentioned place, received a very severe handling from a water-side lad, when all the fight was knocked out of him in less than ten minutes.

The fair in Battersea, in all probability, did no more harm to the morals of jaded Londoners than did those of Greenwich, Wandsworth, and other suburban places. The great evils in regard to Battersea Fields were the huge gatherings that took place there on every Sunday from the end of May till late in September. As soon as the Sunday dinner-hour had passed, the crowds of people from all parts began to flock to the steamboat piers upon the Thames, and steamer after steamer, swarmed with freights of the scum of all London, collected from the various Alsacias on both sides of the river. As each steamboat carried probably 350 passengers, and as they followed each other at intervals of a quarter of an hour, one may fairly estimate the number of persons who were assembled within the limits of the area described at the commencement of this article. Yet the steamboats did not by any means represent the whole of the carrying plant. Pleasure vans from Putney, Wandsworth, Hammersmith, and Fulham dumped their cargoes into Battersea in front of the Rising Sun and the Swan taverns, which were within five minutes' walk of the fields. From Clapham and Vauxhall came the merry footers to swell the orgies. Chelsea sent over the roughs from Jews' Road, the World's End, and Brompton, the passage across the river being made by means of the many watermen's boats that for the rest of the week lay at their moorings by the Cadogan and Manor Street piers. These boats, wherries, and skiffs were large roomy conveyances, usually licensed to carry eight persons; but the writer has constantly seen the boats so weighted as to leave barely an inch of gunwale above the water, yet in the whole space of time between 1842 and the period of his departure from Thames-side not a single accident attended with loss of life ever occurred. Chelsea at that time boasted a ferry and watermen by the score, the head-quarters of whom was the hostelry which stood at the bottom of Manor Street, yclept The Yorkshire Grey. About noon the passage of the river began, increasing till four o'clock, when, after a slight period of slackness, the return journey commenced. Boat followed boat in quick succession, so that one might have counted ten or a dozen light craft between bank and bank. The fare was one penny across, but often when the ebb was nearly over, and the mud-banks had to be traversed, carriers who hung about the foreshore would proffer their aid to convey the "ladies" over the mud. Late in the evenings, too, the watermen would ramp the tired excursionists by insisting on treble fares before passengers were allowed to enter their boats. Upon the actual marsh itself the amusements were of a far more disorderly character than in the annual fair. Men and women were robbed and insulted. The boxing-booths, certainly, were not pitched; but horse-racing, swings, shows, and target-shooting were always in full force. Fights, real and "got up" (for robbery), were plentiful, so that any person, male or female, might consider himself, or herself, fortunate in arriving home with a whole skin or a purse that had not been tampered with. Watches, as a rule, were left at home; but those were sometimes lost, as one might suppose, by the advertisements which appeared during the following week, and which usually commenced as follows: "Lost, on Sunday last, in Battersea Fields." The return of the excursionists at night made confusion worse confounded, for nobody was safe from the insults of the merry-makers. Later on, matters arrived at such a pitch that Parliament was called upon to interfere and stop the rowdyism. Accordingly, an Act was passed declaring it to be unlawful for persons to assemble at Battersea. The gipsies were scattered, and for a year or two peace reigned over the famous marsh. The Battersea Fields Act was passed in 1846, and an Act to alter and amend the powers of the Commissioners in 1851, when the construction of the park took the form of consideration: It proved to be costly and tedious, most of the land being sometimes submerged and always marshy. An embankment was made and the land drained. To raise it 1,000,000 cubic feet of earth was obtained by excavating the Victoria Docks below Blackwall, and brought

up in barges. The land, so prepared, was fit for laying out in 1856, and the park was formally opened on March 28th, 1858. The total cost was £313,000. Its special feature is the sub-tropical garden of four acres, which is the finest of its kind open to the public. Bridges cross the Thames both to the east and west of the park, and there are railway stations and a steamboat pier close at hand, so that Battersea Park is readily accessible from any part of London. The park consists of 199 acres.

This article would not be complete without some kind of reference to the solitary being who for years took up her abode in the middle of the marsh, under a canvas tent erected over boughs cut from the neighbouring trees and forced into the ground on either side. In the hottest summer and during the coldest winter, even when the snow was knee-deep on the marsh, she was to be found sitting, or sleeping, in her rude habitation. She was a tall handsome woman, the wife of Gipsy Lee. The woman had committed some crime, of which the husband was accused. Faithful to his spouse, he had borne the suspicion, trial, and sentence of seven years' transportation without revealing the secret that would subject his wife to a similar sentence to that which he suffered. "I'll do it, mate," he remarked, "and you wait for me here until I return." He was unable to bear the strain of separation, incarceration, and unhealthy climate. So he died before the period of his sentence expired. She remained faithful to her promise, and never left Battersea Fields until the Act was passed to clear out all objectionable characters. Once, and once only, after I saw her as Queen of the Gipsies in the Maze at Cremorne Gardens. She sat in the open space in the centre of the Maze, and told fortunes to the visitors of the gardens. She had aged much; but her glorious hair still hung over her shoulders, and the plaid red shawl that one always recognised her by was still wound around her. But the canker-worm was gnawing at her heart, and very shortly she disappeared altogether from the region of her troubles.

As to the river space between the Fields and the Royal Hospital, Maitland's remarks are as follows: "The Britons, being defeated by the Roman Prætor, in the reign of Claudius, were obliged to take refuge in their bogs and marshes on the banks of the Thames. They, being closely pursued by the Romans, forded the river, the Romans being unable to follow until their main army arrived, when they crossed and completely routed the Britons. By sounding the river on September 18th, 1732, I found, about 90ft. south-west angle of the Hospital Garden, a ford, the deepest part of which was only 4ft. 7in. at low water. This, doubtless, was where the rival armies crossed, and doubtless, also, where Julius Cæsar crossed when he routed the Britons; notwithstanding what had been alleged by Camden and others in favour of Cowey Stakes, the Hospital ford being much shallower. Again, in Antoninus's second journey, London appears to have been seventy-seven Roman miles from the port Ritupis, in Kent, where Cæsar landed, to which, being added about three of the same miles from the Millarium (London Stone) in Cannon Street to the aforesaid ford at Chelsey, they will exactly answer to the account of about eighty miles, given by Cæsar, of the distance of Cassivelaun's confines from the sea, whereas seventeen Roman miles, the distance of London to Cowey Stakes, being added to the Itinerary, the same will therefore be increased to ninety-four miles, which can, by no means, agree with the account given by Cæsar. I may also state that in the early fifties, I, with many others, have repeatedly walked across the Thames, at low water, at the point named above, with the exception of having to swim the channel that had been dredged for the steamboats to ply from Chelsea to London Bridge, which channel would probably not be more than 20ft. or 30ft. in width."

## MISTLETOE.

MISTLETOE, from its ancient association with our Christmas festivities, is probably one of the most familiar of all British plants to the majority of our population; yet few people, comparatively speaking, can claim any intimate acquaintance with it in a growing state. It is our only indigenous representative of an extensive order of parasitical shrubs—the Loranaceæ—which embraces many genera and nearly five hundred species, most of which are tropical, or confined to the warmer regions of the globe, and only a single other species of which—*Loranthus europæus*—occurs in Europe.

Our plant is the *Viscum album*, a designation given it from the sticky nature of the juice of its berries, which forms the chief ingredient of one of the best-known forms of birdlime. Many of the tropical species have brilliantly-coloured flowers; but those of our native plant are small and insignificant, of a yellowish green colour, appearing in April or May. Our mistletoe is one of those plants which are termed by botanists diœcious, signifying that the male and female flowers are borne upon different bushes; consequently it is essential to have examples of either sex growing near one another if it is desired that berries should be produced.



Mistletoe grows freely on a variety of trees, chiefly upon such as are soft wooded, like the apple, rowan, poplar, etc. The Druids, it is said, held that only sacred which flourished upon the oak; but at the present day it is not commonly seen on that tree. As a true native it is confined to the Southern and Midland Counties of England and Wales; but it has been successfully introduced into several districts to which it is not indigenous. The plant must be grown from seed, and one very common cause of failure when the experiment has been tried has been from the use of the berries which are so common about Christmas-time, but which are not then fully matured. Another frequent source of disappointment arises from the prevalent idea that it is necessary to make some cut, or wound, on the bark of the tree in order that the parasite may take root, while anything of that sort only militates against the chance of the seed germinating. The berries do not generally ripen till about April, and should be "sown" as soon as possible after being gathered, and, in order to obtain the best results, the largest and best fruit should be selected. All that is then necessary is to choose a branch that is not too old (one of an inch or two in diameter is about the best size), having clean, smooth bark, as free as possible from irregularities of any kind, and also out of the way of any side shoots, from which birds could conveniently reach the adhering seed. Take then the berry (which contains a single stone) and, gently squeezing it between the finger and thumb, bring the expressed stone into contact with the bark, to which the gummy juice with which it is surrounded will readily adhere. The skin of the berry is then thrown away, and the same process may be repeated upon another branch, and the rest left to Nature. The seed should not be rubbed or touched in any way. In a short time the gummy substance will have dried up, leaving the stone sticking firmly to the branch, and the only mishap which is then likely to befall it is that it may be picked off by some too inquisitive sparrow. To guard against this a bit of open muslin may be tied loosely over the branch if thought desirable.

Shortly after the berries have been placed upon the tree, a young green shoot appears, which turns towards the bark, and ultimately fixes itself therein; and if all goes well a short growth, bearing the well-known pair of opposite wing-like leaves, will spring up during the following year, after which the plant will grow apace. In a wild state mistletoe is entirely dependent upon birds for its distribution from tree to tree, and in this we have the probable reason for the viscid nature of its juice. Many birds are fond of the berries, and in feeding upon them a chance stone sticks to the outside of a bill, and the bird flying off

with it wipes its mouth upon another branch, and so leaves the stone adhering there. Professor Newton has brought together a good deal of information concerning the name of the plant; and the following is extracted from his notes upon the mistletoe-thrush in the fourth edition of "Yarrell's British Birds." Dr. Prior in his "Popular Names of British Plants" gives the derivation of the name, or its Old-English equivalent, mistiltan, from mistl, different, and tan, twig, being so unlike the tree it grows upon; but Mr. W. W. Skeat and Mr. J. Rawson Lumby think mistl to be an unusual contraction of the unusual form mistlfe, which is a corruption of mislfe (unlike), while the doctor's derivation, taken from Bosworth, is contradicted by the use of the T in the Old High-German mistil (mistletoe). This last, clearly the origin of the first part of the plant's name, is probably from mist, meaning dirt or obscurity. The idea of dirt, from the viscosity of the berries, is most likely that which is here attached to the word; but it may refer to Mist, one of the goddesses of fate in the Northern mythology, and in this sense mistletoe would signify "twig of fate," in connection with which there is a story in Snorri's "Edda." Tan, it may be observed, still survives in English in the "tine" of a stag's antler. LICHEN GREY.

## OTTER-HUNTING ON THE CHERWELL.

TO the man who wrote this little article these lovely pictures of the Bucks Otter-Hounds at work on and in the Cherwell are a pleasant revelation. He deemed



THE BUCKS OTTER-HOUNDS AT CROPREDY BRIDGE.

himself to have run through the whole gamut of the pleasures of the Cherwell. He had lounged there in punts in undergraduate days under the cool willows with friends as lazy as himself, and always books, sometimes a sufficient demijohn of claret cup also, were taken on board wherewith to coax the easy hours away. Almost had he lived up to Omar's ideal of bliss:

A Book of Verses underneath the  
Bough  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—  
and Thou  
Beside me singing in the wilder-  
ness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise  
enow!

There was no bread, for none was needed; thank goodness there was no singing in that wilderness; and the representative of "Thou" was, save perhaps on some slack afternoon in the middle of Commemoration, usually male. Still, it was a very Paradise for innocent loafing in the days that are gone beyond



EASY FOR THE FIELD.

recalling, no less for the Cherwell than for him who writes, since the multitudinous ladies of North Oxford have now robbed the lower reaches of Cherwell of all tranquillity. Longer expeditions were there also in those same days, voyages to Water Eaton and to Islip, not without their little perils by reason of the tortuous course of the little river and, now and again, a pollard willow, victim of some storm of the winter, lying prostrate half across the stream, clinging to life, its branches still clothed with abundant leaves. Parson's Pleasure there was on the way, before which the ladies must needs disembark and fetch a compass while masculine youth carried the boat over the rollers and rowed round to them, since Parson's Pleasure was just a place where rude men bathed, and was by no means confined to the clergy. Cherwell has been visited many a time since, for this man who writes abides hard by unto Abingdon, which is but six miles from Oxford; and it will most assuredly be visited by him many a time in the future.

Of a truth this most ancient river—for Lord Avebury in his "Scenery of England" proves conclusively that Cherwell, Evenlode, and the Thames so far as Reading are part of a river system vastly different to that which we now see on the maps—will now have a doubly strong attraction for this nameless writer, for he is an ardent otter-hunter by instinct, whose hands like the feel of an otter-hunting pole far more than that of a pen, and he is an Abingdonian by adoption. To an otter-hunter these presentments of water and hounds appeal with more than common force, for a reason to be given shortly. To an Abingdonian the venue of the meet has an irresistible attraction. It is Cropredy Bridge. What happened at Cropredy Bridge? Why there, on June 29th, 1644, Charles I. in person met Sir William Waller and his army, and the end of that battle was that Waller was crushed and "his army decayed and melted away by desertion." Why, again, should this be a joyful memory to this true son of Abingdon, whether by birth or by adoption, and whether in other respects his proclivities be Puritan or Cavalier? Surely for a most excellent reason. The rest of the world has perhaps forgotten, but Abingdon will never forget, that Waller was the wanton destroyer of the famous cross of Abingdon, octagonal and adorned with three rows of statues, from which, as Abingdon men are all willing to believe, the celebrated cross at Coventry was copied. So Cropredy Bridge, over the Cherwell, is the place which lives in Abingdonian memory, or ought so to live, as the spot on which this iconoclast, for conscience's sake but a barbarian none the less, got his due punishment, or some of it.

Of the details of this particular day's otter-hunting the writer, unhappily for himself, knows nothing; but that is no



MARKING AT A POLLARD.

disadvantage to the reader, for it is a fact, often painfully apparent to him or to her who does not hunt, that there is a decided family resemblance between the incidents of each kind of run to hounds, whether it be taken on horseback or on foot, after fox, hare, or otter. Since the foregoing sentence sternly declines to be other than equivocal, be it added that the exact meaning intended is that every fox-hunt has its resemblance to every other fox-hunt, and likewise every hare-hunt and otter-hunt. Of the last, as of the other two, the actual reminiscences are always full of excitement and interest to those who have shared in it, as they may be generally trusted to demonstrate *ad nauseam*, and the weariness, to translate the word with equal elegance and inaccuracy, clearly comes pretty quickly to those who are compelled to listen. Generalities are really the proper treatment for hunting pictures, or, at any rate, a proper treatment. Here one may see some distinctly robust otter-hunters of both sexes, for the leaf is not yet on the trees, though surely there is a suspicion of catkins on one overhanging branch, and sympathy for the huntsman fording the river may be qualified by the hope that the pictures were taken in that blessed week of premature summer which raised our hearts at Eastertide, hearts which have been depressed below zero many a time since. As for the nature of the country, it would be plain enough even if one did not know the basin of the Cherwell. The slow stream, often deep, and giving an otter every kind of chance for his life, runs between flat meadows, where the going is easy for man and woman, and its banks are fringed with pollarded willows, in the arched roots of which is abundant room for many a fairly strong holt.

But it is doubtful—more than doubtful—whether any willow tree in a flat and rockless country can provide anything like so impregnable a stronghold as those to be found in the North Country, the West or in Wales, where the brawling streams run between banks that are at times an inextricable maze of alder roots and tumbled boulders. However, there are always compensations in things, for in this deep and usually sluggish and opaque water the otter has less need of impenetrable holts than on any save the largest rivers of wilder countries. Again, he who looks with imagination warmed by experience can hear the cry of men, the music of the hounds, the cheerful plash of water, and can watch the very expression of the sterns—far the most expressive feature of a hound's countenance, as an Irishman might say—as they "mark" around that very ancient pollard.



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TRY OVER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



These hounds, too, are well worth attention. It is stated that with the exception of the Dumfriesshire, they are the only pack left consisting entirely of pure otter-hounds, and if this be accurate, it is matter for genuine regret. True it is that more execution can be done among the otters by a pack of pure-bred foxhounds, and more still by a mixed pack, for your otter-hound is possessed of the better nose for an otter, and will speak to a drag at which a foxhound will make no sign; but your foxhound has more dash when scent is hot, and is altogether the fiercer animal. But, when all has been said, we do not all feel towards the otter the revengeful animosity of Piscator, and, although a kill is the best finale to a run, the true otter-hunter is never in a great hurry to see that climax. There is, indeed, something indescribably fascinating in the deliberate ways of the true otter-hound, his patience, his "shaggy indomitable" mien (that was said of a Dandie Dinmont really), and, above all, in his deep-throated note. Moreover, it is grateful to remember that Mr. Gerald Lascelles, who knows as much of otter-hounds, and hunting them, as any man, is clearly of opinion that the otter-hound is "one of the genuine ancient types of dog, viz., the rough or broken-haired hound, the bloodhound being the prototype of the smooth variety." At any rate, there is no doubt about the pure breeding of this pack, for the points, the high "peak," the shaggy coats, black, tan, and sandy, with here and there an admixture of white, the long and hanging ears, the sound limbs, and the strong frames, are all there. They are a sight to behold even in pictures; and

interest on the capital. Six of these committees have been formed at Breslau, Bromberg, Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, Hanover, Königsberg, and Münster." According to Herr Linschmann, who has written an article on the subject in the *Landwirtschaftliche Jahrbücher*, the scheme has been fairly successful. Between 1891 and 1903 close on 10,000 holdings had been allotted, having a total area of 280,000 acres and a value of about £4,250,000. The average price came out at about £15 per acre. Of the total number of holders, about 317 had become bankrupt, and involved the State in a loss of £34,000, but of course this bears a very small proportion to the whole. Herr Linschmann gives a very interesting account of the manner in which great farms have been broken up. "One farm (Plümenhagen) of about 700 acres, for example, together with eight small holdings, covering 175 acres, was cut up into thirty holdings, one of which was over 62 acres, eleven varied from 25 to 62 acres, thirteen from 12½ to 25 acres, while five were less than 12½ acres. The rent of the farm, before being divided, was £650 per annum, while the aggregate payments of the thirty holders only amount to £719, which includes a payment of 3 per cent. on the capital value, and is payable for a period of sixty and a-half years, when the debt will be extinguished. The number of persons in the area has increased from 95 to 130. The cost for buildings amounts to about £270 for a one-horse farm, and £390 for a two-horse farm." It is found that more stock is kept on the small farms than were kept on



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OVER THE DAM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

it will go hard with one at least of their admirers if he does not make their acquaintance ere long; nor need the hope of seeing them be faint, for they hunt many rivers of Bucks, Beds, Northants, Warwickshire, Rutland, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, and adjoining counties.

## FROM THE FARMS.

### SMALL HOLDINGS IN GERMANY.

IT is extremely interesting to note what is being done in Germany to promote the formation of small holdings. Two laws were passed by the Prussian Government, one on June 27th, 1890, and the other on July 7th, 1891. Their object was to help the formation of general committees in different provinces, "which should undertake negotiations for the purchase and sale of holdings, prepare plans, afford legal and technical assistance to the purchaser, and in every way facilitate the transfer." In the words of a writer in the *Journal of the Board of Agriculture*, "The transaction was to be concluded through certain Government institutions known as *Rentenbanken*, which effected the purchase either by a cash payment or by giving the seller a negotiable bond, guaranteed by the State, for three-fourths of the price agreed upon, and received from the new holder an annual rent based on a scale providing for the extinction of the mortgage with

the large one. The cattle increased from 48 to 131, horses from 20 to 43, pigs from 40 to 356, and poultry from 53 to 608. A corresponding increase took place in the production of hay, roots, potatoes, and cereals. Another estate is described, that of Zemitz, of 1,370 acres. This was split up into fifty-one holdings, of which thirteen were under 6½ acres, fifteen under 25 acres, twenty from 25 to 62 acres, and three above that area. The majority, however, were classed as one-horse farms, and were of an average size of about 32 acres, paying a rent of about 14s. an acre. The same increase of live-stock is to be reported from this district, horses, cattle, pigs, and poultry all having increased to a very large extent, while, more important still, the number of people living on the land was 300 as compared with 70 when it was held in one holding. These experiments in Germany will be of the utmost service to those in England who are contemplating the establishment of small holdings, and we cannot do better than to recommend those who are interested in them to turn to the *Journal of the Board of Agriculture* for April, where they will find a full and interesting account of the proceedings.

### TESTING POTATOES.

Dealers in potatoes are becoming increasingly aware of the advisability of testing the tubers for the purpose of ascertaining their cooking properties, and at several agricultural centres experiments have been carried out with this end in view. This is especially true of Leeds University, and Edinburgh and the

East of Scotland Agricultural College. In testing potatoes marks were awarded for the appearance, which should be dry, white, mealy, and glistening; texture, which should be firm and free from soapiness in the centre; and thirdly flavour. The taste should be pleasant and free from peculiar flavours. For each of these branches ten marks were awarded. The result of the experiment was to show that Langworthy was excellent, while the following potatoes were classified as very good: Twentieth Century, White Blossom, and British Queen. A mark below these, but still good, were Pink Blossom, Factor, Up-to-Date, and King Edward VII. Goodfellow was described as fair, while among the inferior were placed Evergood, Empire Kidney, Empress Queen, and Royal Kidney. Of course in growing potatoes variations will be caused by the nature of the soil and the

engaged in orcharding and market gardening. The Board of Agriculture has been making some enquiries as to what is done abroad in the way of protecting fruit trees from frost by means of smoke. The director of the Horticultural School at Ghent says that the usual process is to burn leaves, preferably of resinous plants, such as yew. In France the small proprietors burn fresh wood, damp hay or straw, or half-rotten dung, while heavy oils are also used occasionally. Several manufacturers have patented preparations to yield a dense smoke for this purpose, but they are somewhat too expensive for the frugal holders, who find it cheaper and almost as effective to use chopped straw or some other substitute. The reporter of the Board of Agriculture says that several growers in England made experiments of this kind during the course of last season, and



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ONE TYPE OF PIGSTY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

character of manuring. But on the whole the results may be taken as indicating the value of the potato, and are very valuable, as they show that some of the varieties greatly boomed of recent years are really not worth much.

#### THE ADULTERATION OF MILK.

*A propos* of our comments upon this subject, a correspondent who thoroughly understands dairy-work, but prefers to write anonymously, sends us the following very suggestive letter, which we commend to the attention of those authorities who control the work of the inspectors of milk: "You have allowed much discussion in your interesting paper on the subject of the milk supply generally. Although we are living where three or four farmers professedly send in all their milk to retail dealers in the neighbouring city, how is it that they all use separators, and now also supply a good quantity of butter and separated cream? At the factories where most of the milk is sent to London, why is a separator necessary where the milk is canned? Inspectors go to the retail shops and test the milk; would it not be more sensible and much more for the good of the consumer if they saw the milk as it is brought in, and then tested it, again doing so when the milk is ready for sale? It would also serve a good purpose if they sometimes saw the cows milked, especially in the mornings in the fields; perhaps they would be somewhat surprised to see the filthy condition of the cows' udders. Is it possible that the milk can be clean and pure under these circumstances? Although we are surrounded by dairy farms, we cannot get milk that by standing will yield a teaspoonful of cream to a quart, and we are often tempted to ask—for what are inspectors appointed and paid?"

#### THE PROTECTION OF FRUIT TREES FROM FROST.

At the moment this subject has a distressing importance for those

achieved at least a partial success. It would be interesting to know if any of our readers have tried to save their fruits from frost by this means. We should not think that there is any great number, because, as far as our observation goes, the keen nights have been well-nigh fatal to the fruit crop of the present season, which threatens to be one of the very poorest on record.

#### THE COMING SHOWS.

With the advent of May we enter in earnest upon the season of agricultural exhibitions, the opening one being that of the Oxfordshire Agricultural Society, which will be held at Henley on May 16th and 17th. The Somerset County Agricultural Association will hold its show on the same days at Tavistock. On the last day of May, the Bath and West and Southern Counties Society will open at Swindon, and continue to June 5th, the shows of the Gloucestershire Agricultural Society and the Wiltshire Agricultural Association being held simultaneously at the same place. On June 4th, the London Cart-Horse Society holds its annual parade in Regent's Park. On June 5th, the Huntingdonshire Society holds its show at St. Neot's, and the Nottinghamshire Show opens at Calwich Park, Birmingham. The Shropshire, the Suffolk, and the Worcestershire Shows are all held about the same time, while the

Royal Counties Agricultural Society opens at Portsmouth on June 12th. Immediately after that comes the show of the Essex Agricultural Society at Brentwood and the Leicester Agricultural Society at Leicester. That pleasant annual event, the Richmond Horse Show, will take place on June 15th and 16th. The Norfolk Agricultural Association holds its show at Harleston on June 20th and 21st. The last days of June will witness the experiment of the Royal Agricultural Society returning to the old perambulating system, that week being chosen



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ANOTHER MODEL PIGGERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



for the show at Derby. Following that comes the Peterborough Agricultural Society's Show on July 10th, and various other counties keep the ball rolling until the middle of August, so that between now and autumn there is scarcely a week in which the connoisseur of livestock and the skilled in agricultural implements will not have an opportunity of studying the best of the products they are interested in. A considerable number of these annual shows are run successfully, and it would be impertinent to offer them any advice or suggestion; but it is no secret that a considerable proportion are in a state of impecuniosity,

and always in doubt as to where the sinews of war are to be found. To them it might be recommended to make their shows more practical. After all, the interests of agriculture are not so efficiently served by having one or two animals brought up to an abnormal state of perfection as by the whole stock on a farm being the best attainable in the interests of husbandry. All of which tends to show that it would be advisable to extend the plan already mooted of allotting prizes after a careful inspection of farms, which need not necessarily diminish the number of animals in the show-yard.

## ON LUNDY ISLE.

THERE are, I suppose, few creatures more conservative in their habits than birds, and this trait is nowhere more marked than in their adherence to their old nesting quarters, if not to their mates. And Lundy must have been the nursery of thousands of sea-birds ever since its creation, or, at any rate, since it was an island, and sea-birds developed their distinctive form and habits. For the very word "Lundy" means "Puffin Island" (Anglo-Saxon, Lunde=puffin;

than its own immediate interests. We may sit for hours, day after day, in their midst, observe their habits, their goings out and comings in, and yet their real life remains a sealed book.

Let no one, however, suppose that the time so spent is wasted; one gains a kind of knowledge that is not set forth in books, and the process of gaining it is vastly entertaining. For the birds soon accustom themselves to your presence, and you note at leisure a certain individuality of character about each.



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PUFFINS AND RAZOR-BILLS.

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ey=island), and from the day when our Viking forefathers christened the island after one of its most striking characteristics, to the present time Lundy has well deserved its name.

Year after year as the month of May comes round these ocean nomads, who spend by far the greater portion of their lives out of sight of land, are impelled by one instinct, and come streaming in from north and south and west, back to their old breeding station at the north end of Lundy and along its precipitous western coast, and during a stay of rather more than three months obey the mandate to "multiply and replenish the earth"—each pair bringing forth one offspring to swell the wonderful tide of life, or, perhaps, to fall a victim to one of the many chances of death, and serve to nourish the progeny of a peregrine falcon.

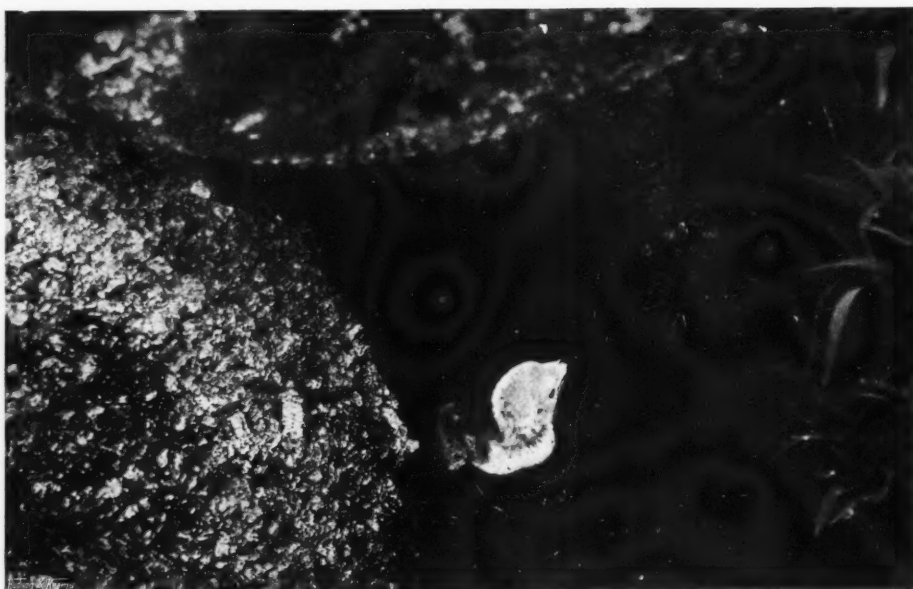
Who will read us the riddle of life? We have learned much of late about bird-life, but how little do we really know of it! Here, for a short space, the birds from an area of several hundred square miles are concentrated in a few acres. We see a puffin city, a corporate unity, organised unconsciously, perhaps, but still organised, bound together by a common purpose, by common needs. To each bird life is intensely real, intensely earnest; yet each appears absolutely indifferent to any other

Physically, the human eye can seldom perceive a difference, save when a soiled patch on the usually spruce white breast feathers distinguishes a brooding female, and one wonders how the birds recognise each other. But they seem to have a good memory for foes as well as friends, or how shall we account for those sudden, seemingly unprovoked quarrels? A group of puffins is seated peaceably on some boulder when another bird joins the party; immediately one seizes him with his powerful beak, and the two struggle and strain till one or both fall off. Or is it only a variation of the world-old and world-wide game of "I am the king of the castle"? If so, it is played with such ludicrous gravity that the onlooker runs the risk of disturbing the whole pantomime by bursting into a fit of laughter.

The best times for observation at Lundy are about 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., when the sitting birds emerge from their burrows to join their mates and the unattached in their exercise—a kind of constitutional flight round and round a circle, whose diameter extends perhaps half a mile out to sea. It is a wonderful sight that meets the eye—full of the interest of life. The curved, rock-strewn slope forms a vast amphitheatre, and tier above tier, bench above bench, from the lip of the cliff to the summits, silhouetted against the sky, the puffins sit basking in the warm sunshine.

The living stream of birds in the air confuses the eye, and the swish of wings is constant overhead. Birds are continually settling, continually leaving, and far below, rising and falling on the dancing waves, are countless specks of black, now disappearing and anon re-appearing as they seek their prey beneath the surface of the sea. And yet each has an identity, an individuality, thinks its own thoughts, and lives its own life.

Presently some of these fishers return with their spoil—four, six, or perhaps eight little fish held crosswise in the beak. Wonderful! how they catch those slippery little fellows in their own element. From the cliffs one can sometimes see them skimming rapidly along under the surface of the water, sweeping through a shoal, one must suppose, and taking a heavy toll of the crowd. And then these curious beaks! Unaccountably curious they seem to me. There may be a certain amount of reason in the accusation that Nature is more than lavish in her gifts—nay, that she squanders them—but there is, or has been, a purpose in every form her creations take. And so it is with these beaks, if we could only find it. Certainly, when one sees them holding the fish, one must admit that they serve the purpose admirably, and it is possible that the gay colours, though shared by male and female, may have their origin in sexual attraction. But to my mind this is not sufficient. Where is the need of the extraordinary depth? Why should not a narrower beak serve the purpose equally well? For this large sheath is shed during the autumn, and a much smaller and duller-coloured beak does duty for the winter. Are we to suppose that this large growth is specially for the purpose of carrying fish to the young and finding favour in one another's eyes? Would that the puffins could speak and tell us! But they are extraordinarily silent, even amongst themselves. Animated as is the scene I have just described, the only sounds that greet the ear are the swish of wings, the angry, murmuring grunt of the razor-bill, the occasional wailing cry of a prowling gull, and the everlasting monotone of the sea. Indeed, I do not remember ever having heard a puffin make any vocal effort, and the guillemot is very nearly as bad. So it falls upon the kittiwakes to atone for the silence of the cliff-breeders, and their clamour is almost incessant. "Kitti-wa-ake, kitti-wa-ake," the whole colony gives tongue at once, and a little snowstorm of birds swirls out from the cliffs, scatters, reunites, and resettles. To what shall I liken a kittiwake? In its daintiness it is the butterfly of the sea, but its flight is more purposeful. I have seen them toying with the storm when the waves, leaping up cliffs, and over-reaching the safety margin left by the birds, have swept away their nests by scores. The wind rushed up the gullies with tremendous force, and the birds, adjusting the area of their wings to the pressure of the air, remained stationary as a kestrel, their tails blown up almost over their backs and their feet hanging down to preserve the balance;



A. J. R. Roberts.

## A RAZOR-BILL CHICK.

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then, stretching their wings, they would allow themselves to be whirled high into the air, and would return again and again to the sport as with the utmost enjoyment. One pictured them as snowflakes, or bits of pure white foam—something born of the sea to be the plaything of the wind—and when they settled on the waters one had a momentary fear lest they should melt and vanish away. I like the simile, too, which compares the brooding birds to little marble saints in their niches. They are so utterly serene amidst the contest of the elements that is going on around them, though at times when one bird alights on a nest that does not belong to it, and is promptly and vociferously driven off, the dignity of the scene suffers.

Totally different is the impression caused by a colony of guillemots brooding on the ledges of the cliffs or on the summit of some stack rock. They are materialists, completely absorbed in the business of life, with no time for sport or play. Indeed, Nature has shut that door to them, for the wings, specially reduced to enable the birds to fly under water, scarcely more than suffice to support them in the air. Its weight does, indeed, enable it to attain a high speed, but it can only admire the gyrations of the gull from afar.

I have already hinted that the guillemot is no gossip, but it appears exceedingly inquisitive as it twists and turns its snaky neck and body, whose only fixed point is that which rests on the egg. The reader may imagine for himself the effect of several hundred birds behaving in this way; for myself, I think of those little rubber bottles with rounded bottom weighted with lead, which will not lie down, and wobble in the most curious way when one tries to make them.

The egg itself is pear-shaped, and tends, therefore, to roll in a circle—a wonderful provision on Nature's part for its safety. Unfortunately, however, the ledges on which they are laid are often too narrow to admit even of this manoeuvre, and hundreds must be destroyed by wind in the course of a season. Still greater destruction is caused by the gulls, from whose depredations the puffins alone are exempt, for the sole reason that the gull cannot enter their burrows. This is the shady side of the brightest picture one may draw of these sea-bird colonies—the redressing of the balance by Nature. There is no room for unchecked increase, and the birds know the many chances with which they have to contend. You see it in their reluctance to leave their eggs when you approach, lest some pirate gull should snatch them away before their return. And when the perils of incubation are safely passed, when the young birds are fledged and led down to the water, with what anxiety must the parents watch the skies, lest a storm should arise before their young are strong enough to do battle with it. Hundreds do get drowned by the pitiless waves; but it is Nature's selection of the strongest, the working of her law which rules that the fittest alone shall survive.

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## ON THE LOOK-OUT.

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## SHOOTING.

## COUNSEL TO PHEASANT-REARERS.

BY LORD ERNEST HAMILTON.

WITH the approach of the rearing season comes once more the question as to whether the traditional, time-honoured methods handed down from keeper-father to keeper-son are really those calculated to produce the best results. It will be agreed by all who are thrown into frequent contact with keepers, that they are, as a class, men of a superior intelligence. If they err, it is probably in the direction of a too rigid conservatism, and an unalterable contempt for anything bearing on their business that appears in print, the idea, of course, being that the man who dogmatizes in print is, of necessity, a theorist, and the advice of such a thing of no weight. It may, however, not unreasonably be argued, that the man who writes has opportunities of absorbing the experience of others, which do not come within the restricted horizon of a keeper, however practical; and the frequent disasters reported from rearing-fields would point to the conclusion that the stereotyped methods of the purely practical man fall short of all that could be desired.

A very frequent cause, however, of disaster is one that is outside the immediate control of any keeper. On large estates, where year after year sufficient eggs are picked up to supply all requirements, the in-breeding that results must in time work evil results. In-bred birds breed freely, and the eggs hatch freely, but they lack vitality, and though several succeeding generations may show no visible signs of decay an adverse season will be sure to find out their weakness. Game-farmers have opportunities of experimenting in this direction which are not given to keepers, and the results of such experiments tend to prove that the disease-resisting power of out-bred birds is enormously greater than that of birds bred from related parents. The invigorating effect of unrelated blood on a stock is never more clearly seen than on an estate where a few Hungarian partridges have been introduced.

In the matter of feeding omnivorous birds, such as pheasants, there is, of course, an immense latitude within which fair results may be obtained. Generally speaking, the tendency is probably to give too much animal food and too little green food. There is an evil substance, known as "greaves" or "meat meal," which is probably at the bottom of most outbreaks of epidemic disease. It is, as often as not, nothing better than the fibrous residue of what has once been flesh of some sort, chemically prepared to resist the action of the air, and it is sold at a very high price. It is an admirable thing for killing sparrows, but it is not good to feed pheasants on. Green bone, crushed to a pulp by some good bonemill, such as Stearn's, is an admirable food. Many cheap mills merely splinter the bone, which is worse than useless. Blood mixed with the meal is of the greatest value as an animal food. Beef blood is the best, being thinner and easier to handle, but it is not so regularly procurable as sheep's blood. The latter should be stirred with a stick, while still warm, till it cools, otherwise it will clot and coagulate.

There is a tendency, just as fatal, among pheasant-rearers to underrate the importance of green food as to overdo the animal food. In the month of August, on the thirsty soils of Norfolk and Suffolk, there is, in a dry, hot season, very little fresh green growth to satisfy the demands of the crowds of birds that are sometimes turned into the woods. It is a critical period in the life of a pheasant; the blackberries have not yet come on, and in their craving for a green vegetable diet the birds will—in default of better—eat bramble leaves and even ivy. And when the evil is aggravated by the administration of "greaves," it is hardly surprising that mortality ensues. The

quantity of young grass and other green food that pheasants will consume would hardly be credited by those who have not had numbers of birds under their daily supervision. Lettuce, cabbage, thousand-head kale, and sliced swedes are all valuable in their season. In a specially severe drought pumpkins and vegetable marrows may be given, and will repay their cost over and over again. Boiled nettles are also useful.

The crops of two wild pheasants opened in September last contained a quantity of elder-berries, bracken points, grass seeds, and some grit, but in neither case any trace of animal food. It would be of great value to pheasant-rearers if the crops of wild pheasants of all ages, and at all seasons of the year, were investigated, so that artificial feeding could be brought nearer to the lines indicated by Nature. It would probably be found that, for the greater part of the year, the amount of animal food consumed is very small. In the winter Nature provides no artificial food beyond earth-worms, and yet, where pheasants are left entirely to Nature, as on many large estates in Scotland, numbers are shot, of a size, weight, and plumage that would compare favourably with any artificially-fed birds from English coverts; nor can it be argued that this is merely a survival of

the fittest, where the "fittest" number some two or three thousand. It is, however, very hard to eradicate from the British mind the idea that meat is the panacea for all ills, whether in babies, beasts, or birds. Such beliefs die hard. James Pigg's theory that "baccy and brandy gar a mon live for ever" probably remained unshaken to the end, in spite of the disappointing experiences of many brother-enthusiasts. So is it next to impossible to persuade the majority of pheasant-rearers of the efficacy of greenstuff as food, as distinct from medicine. An unconvinced and unconvinced keeper once remarked, as he stood watching his pheasants voraciously falling upon the greenstuff which, with great difficulty, he had been persuaded to throw them: "Why, those birds must be ill!"

## NOTES ON THE ENTERIC EPIDEMIC AMONG PHEASANTS.

WE have one or two notes from correspondents, themselves rearers of pheasants, on the symptoms and prevention of the enteric epidemic. One who wrote to us before, speaking of the curious case of an epidemic of enteric which occurred on one estate in 1894, when others round about were free from it, and was itself free from disease in 1895, while all around they suffered, now writes that he has discovered that 1894 was the seventh successive year in which they had reared on the same ground; so they did all they could to deserve an epidemic. He has also been kind enough to

procure for us the composition of the fluid in which they dipped the coops, with the result (at least *post hoc*, and probably *propter hoc* also) that they had no enteric in 1895. The ingredients were simple enough—14lb. of chloride of lime in from twenty to twenty-five gallons of water. Apparently it was perfectly efficacious. Another suggestion for disinfecting coops is to use formalin gas, which acts as a germicide.

The simpler symptoms of the enteric disease are a flabby condition and bad colour of the liver, bad colour of the lungs, blackness of the hinder parts, and enlargement of the gall. This is a sufficient and a clear statement of the facts put into small compass.

By way of a preventive, in addition to the infusion of strong, fresh blood, to yearly changing of the rearing-ground, and frequent changing of the feeding-ground, it is recommended that great care be taken to give the birds a regular supply of drinking water from cans or by sprinkling around the coops with a watering-pot, for if they do not get the water regularly they are inclined to overdrink themselves when they get the chance, which leads to scouring, and it is suggested that, in an aggravated form, this may turn to enteric. It is, perhaps, more probable that, evil though this scouring is, it would rather aggravate an existing tendency to enteric than be in any real sense a cause of it.

A suggestion, which has the added value of coming from one who is a medical man by profession, as well as a pheasant-rearer for pleasure, is to give the birds a very weak solution of boracic acid—about one-half to one



FEEDING PHEASANT CHICKS.



A PHEASANT'S NEST.

per cent.—which is a known bacteria killer; but great care has to be taken in the mixing, and it is suggested that the keeper should get a chemist to teach him to mix it properly. If administered too strong it will cause scouring.

#### HEDGING AND DITCHING.

A subject that might very well be given a great deal more attention than is generally bestowed on it, is that of the trimming of the fences on a game-preserving estate. It is a pretty well-established fact that partridges will not do well when they nest in a late-cut fence, or at least do not seem to do as well as birds which nest in a fence that has done its new growth at an earlier time. It is also generally said that in some counties, which used to carry a big stock of partridges, such as the Lothians in Scotland, the number has gone down a great deal owing to the fact that the farmers have taken to cleaning out the ditches about June. Apart from these special instances it is quite certain that hedge cutting in the interest of game ought to be better understood and more closely studied than it is. For this year, of course, it is too late to prescribe; but we hope to live to see another.

#### THE CADET RIFLE.

There appears to be a general consensus of opinion that the type of miniature rifle selected by the War Office is well adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. There are experts in such matters who differ from the general view, one of the objections urged against the weapon being that it is too heavy to be used by boys; but we think it may fairly be claimed for the new arm that it will be of great service in furthering Lord Roberts's admirable scheme for teaching the youth of the nation to handle a rifle effectively. It is not yet definitely understood whether the War Office intend to place the orders for the new cadet rifle themselves, or to entrust this important matter to the hands of the National Rifle Association. In either of these cases, however, there will be a demand for the new rifle, and the military rifle-makers of the country will be called upon to assist in its manufacture. The production of the cadet rifle will call for the same mechanical skill and precision that are bestowed upon the best types of military arms, and can only be undertaken by firms equipped with a special plant of tools and machinery. The Birmingham Small Arms Company have decided to take up the manufacture of the cadet rifle; they have already shown by the accurate and well-finished air-guns which they have placed on the market that they are thoroughly capable of turning out inexpensive weapons of the highest quality, and there is no doubt that the samples of the new rifle which they hope to have ready for Bisley next July will be in every way worthy of their reputation.

## IMPROVING THE PONIES ON WELSH HILLS.

WE have received, in advance of publication, proofs of a paper which Mr. C. C. Rogers, who is chairman of the Radnorshire County Council, a large owner of property in that county, and himself an enthusiastic breeder of Welsh ponies, has contributed to the fifth volume of the Welsh Cob and Stud Book Society, which is now on the point of publication. The special branch of the more general subjects indicated by the title assumed by the society, to which Mr. Rogers's paper calls attention, is the necessity of some better provision for ensuring that a poor class of pony shall not be introduced by permitting sires of inferior quality to feed on the unenclosed hill pasture in Wales. As to the precise locality which it is proposed to deal with by some legislation to this end, it is designated by Mr. Rogers as "great extents, lying to the westward of the river Wye, which a Victorian poet, on seeing it, described as 'a glorious sea of mountains,' and referred to as 'miles of desolate grandeur.'"

He is careful to say that in approaching a department of Government with a view to obtaining some legislative assistance,

the society would be asking for no great thing; above all, that its demands would be entirely free from any of that financial seeking which would put them into the black books of a Government department at once. "All that we would presume to do," writes Mr. Rogers, "would be to suggest clauses in the direction of those employed under similar circumstances, and for similar objects, in the New Forest Act of 1877. For example, those that give commoners the power, under certain specified regulations, (1) to make drifts on these lands at such time and in such manner as they may think expedient; (2) to make bye-laws with regard to the conditions as to time, breed, or otherwise, under which pony stallions and other male commonable animals are to be allowed to roam at large on the hills." The writer proceeds to point out that the area of pony-carrying land in the New Forest is very insignificant compared with the tracts of land used in Wales for this purpose. "Yet," as he says, "the New Forest has its little law all

to itself, and deals most emphatically with the self-same subject." These, he says, are the kind of laws required for dealing with the hill pasture of Wales, and suggests, further, that their operation should be extended to rams, donkeys, and barren mares.

From this point the writer, who has evidently taken much care about the right arrangement of his material in the form best adapted to develop his argument, proceeds to point out the desirability of enforcing certain clauses of past Enclosure Acts and of framing others of a like kind; and before proceeding to any criticism of his general remarks it may be said that there is about the very word "enclosure" a suggestion or flavour which has a very evil smack in the nostrils of commoners. However, it would appear that nothing in the nature of enclosure of common land is contemplated. The feature to which Mr. Rogers invites special attention is mainly contained in Clause 70 of the Act passed on August 8th, 1845, to facilitate the "Enclosure and Improvement of Commons and Land held in Common"; and in spite of the title of the Act, which is a little ominous, what this particular clause aims at is no more than the appointment of a valuer "to direct the cause of husbandry and stint and rule of stocking that shall be observed upon the land to be enclosed." Mr. Rogers's contention does not refer to land "to be enclosed," but he clearly would favour the appointment of such an official to "ascertain and allot" (as the functions of this official are further amplified and set out in Clause 113) "the respective stints and rights of pasturage, specifying the respective numbers of the respective herds," and so on; with a penalty enacted to be enforced on the commoner who exceeds the limit of the respective herds of stock. It is to be gathered that Mr. Rogers would favour the appointment of an official bearing such powers as these, but at the same time that he deems that the most suitable power which could be given him would be that of keeping off the hill such animals as would be likely to do harm to the interests of the stock.

He then discusses the value of "voluntary effort"—of a kind of social opinion among the commoners—to arrive at the desired end, by a kind of consensus of opinion that poor stallions shall be voluntarily removed, and we think that he arrives at a very just conclusion in deciding that its value would be, and is, very little, and that nothing can be done without legislation. At the same time, he very honestly adduces two instances to the contrary, of undesirable animals being removed of the free will of the commoners, on the Church Stretton Hills and on Gower Common respectively; but he adds that in each case a very strong personal influence was brought to bear, and was really the motive force of the reform. In the former instance the good results were due to the efforts of Mr. John Hill, and in the second of the Hon. Odo Vivian. In the case of Gower Common, the commoners seem to have combined for the purchase of a really good stallion pony, Dick Hill by name, which left its impress in the shape of foals which augmented the value of the general stock very considerably. It is, however, quite obvious that these exceptions are rather of the kind that prove the rule, since it is in few places that such strong personal influence would be found and would be effective.

From Lord Carrington, the Minister of Agriculture, he seems to think that some such legislation as he has outlined may be expected, the more reasonably as Lord Carrington has a peculiar and personal interest in the Principality. He concludes his interesting paper with a quotation of the views of a dealer in Welsh ponies, as expressed to him personally. "In answer to a question" (put to the dealer) "as to whether, if a little more care



had been exercised as to their parentage, these ponies" (referring to a rough lot he had just purchased) "would not have been worth £2 more a head? 'More likely £10,' was the reply."

In our opinion Mr. Rogers has made out his case very well, so far as it deals with the great desirability of the appointment of some sort of control over the pony stallions and other male animals which are put out to pasture on the Welsh hills. Details of the scheme, however, do not seem to be quite so fully elucidated. All who have had anything to do with commoners in different parts of the country must know how very jealous they are of any interference with their rights, or with what they believe to be their rights, how suspicious they are of anyone who tries to control them in any way for the general good of the whole body of the commonalty. And in proportion as their rights are vague, so are they the more disposed to cling to them with noisy and even violent assertion. We have no reason to suppose that the commoners of the Welsh hills would be at all lacking in these typical qualities of the commoner in general; and this being so we imagine that the valuer's life would not be a very happy one, and that the means taken for evading his orders would sometimes go a little beyond what the law recognises as proper for a well-ordered citizen to adopt. Granted, however, that he would have a difficulty in carrying all his orders into execution, that is not to say that it need be so great a difficulty that it might not be overcome. Still, it is a difficulty to be recognised. And then there must be a difficulty, second in degree but first in point of time, about the manner of raising the money for the payment of this official whose popularity is likely to be in inverse proportion to his efficiency. The appropriate way would be to raise it by a rate taken from the commoners in proportion to their rights. The commoners are the people whom his services would benefit (though they will not be very ready to recognise the benefits), and though other means of raising the money to pay for these services suggest themselves readily enough, the rate on the commoners seems the most fair. Of course, it would be a very unpopular rate; but in that it would not differ much from other taxes of its kind. It is to be presumed that there would be no court of appeal from the valuer's decision—which at once implies a rather dangerous power to place in the hands of a man of the class from which he would be taken—for Mr. Rogers rightly enough affirms that he has no wish for the institution of the elaborate machinery, with the archaic titles, by which the New Forest is regulated. The outfit of the functionary would be simple enough, as we may presume—a strong pony and a watcher's field-glass. With these he could overlook a vast stretch of hill country in a very practical way. Presumably the onus of removing from the hills any stallion pony condemned by the valuer would fall on the owner of the pony. It is not always easy to catch or "round up" a particular pony out of a herd on a large tract. Moreover, imagination easily suggests a thousand and one fraudulent ways in which the claims against the owner could be evaded—such as fictitious sale, temporary gift, and so on.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### VORACITY OF PIKE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying photograph of two pike "locked in the embrace of death," which were taken out of my river the other day, may interest your readers. They were alive when first seen, and struggling. By the aid of a pole they were brought to land. The aggressor weighed 3½ lb., the victim 4 lb. Was it a love quarrel that brought about the encounter? This is the midst of the spawning season.—ELIAS P. SQUAREY, The Moat, Downton, Salisbury.

### SPRING MIGRANTS AND OTHER NEWCOMERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have just been spending three weeks (April 7th-30th) at the head of a dale in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and having undertaken during my stay to fill in the schedule of the British Ornithologists' Club I have kept a sharp look-out for migrants. The result, however, has been rather disappointing. For the first ten days we had perfect spring weather, and I was therefore able to detect a few specimens of the ring-ousel and wheatear as early as April 12th, and both birds were soon established in their usual quarters along the steep side of the moor. On April 24th I found a ring-ousel's nest with four eggs in a steep bank in the heather. No other migrant was observed until April 20th, when I caught sight of the first willow-warbler among the trees which fringe the little beck that flows along the bottom of my garden. In a few days their cheery song was to be heard more and more frequently, in spite of the cold winds and snow-showers which set in about April 21st and have continued ever since. On April 21st a single swallow and two martins were observed, but the most careful watching has revealed no further examples, nor have I again seen the first comers. I can only suppose that the return of winter has

driven them South again. I have not once heard or seen the chaff-chaff, nor can I record any other migrant whatever. I quite agree with the writer of a charming article in last week's COUNTRY LIFE that the movements of our bird-visitors are of far more interest and importance than many items of fashionable intelligence. All the more disappointing is it that when a poor Londoner has the rare opportunity of spending three weeks in the country, at the very time when they ought to be in evidence, the conditions of weather should keep them back. It has been a very hard time for the moor-lambs, who have been putting in an appearance almost daily since April 20th. When it hails or snows, from whatever quarter the wind may be in, it is hard to provide adequate shelter, and some of the more tender infants succumb, or have a severe struggle for life. The cold winds, moreover, and long drought have hitherto prevented the grass from growing much on our steep upland pastures, so that the food of the ewes has to be supplemented with hay and turnips by those who are fortunate to have some still in the barn. It is curious that some of the young ewes do not seem to understand or care little about their maternal responsibilities, and in several cases it has been necessary to resort to the bottle. Even so, we have lost some half-dozen of the weaker brethren. Those, however, who can stand the severe climate, into which they have been so unexpectedly introduced, seem to enjoy life greatly; and it is delightful to watch the little creatures, with their black heads and legs, chasing one another about the meadows, or trotting after their sedate mothers.—G. A. M., Danby, Yorkshire.

### BLINDNESS IN PIGEONS.

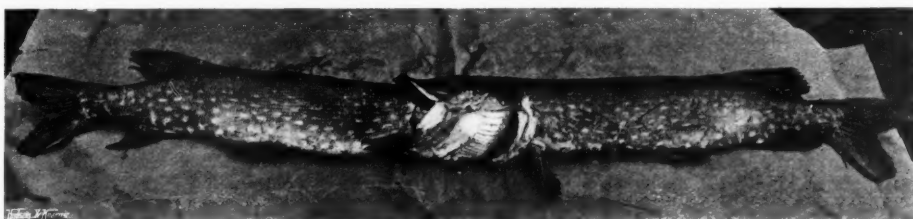
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I notice a letter in your last issue, signed "Minnie Dawe," referring to blindness in pigeons. I have examined one such case, and reported it in the Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society. I shall be greatly indebted to anyone who will send me similar specimens. The head should be cut off as soon as possible and placed in 10 per cent. formal (one part of commercial formalin to nine parts of water). If they are forwarded to me, care of the Curator, Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, City Road, E.C., they will receive careful attention.—J. HERBERT PARSONS, 27, Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square, W.

### WHEATEARS ON DOWNLAND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The scarcity of wheatears, mentioned in your "Wild Country Life" column of April 21st, must be admitted with regret in Sussex Downland, since without doubt, both as residents and migrants, they have diminished in numbers during the last half century. One cause of this diminution has this season been proved to arise from a too-early arrival in our treacherous climate. The first visitor of the year was observed on March 6th seeking shelter in a railway cutting near the Brighton terminus. Others appeared on the summits of the chalk hills about the middle of the month, but were not to be seen amid the snow-storms which occurred later. Whether they had returned across the Channel before the northern blast, or had taken up residence in their native rabbit-burrows to avoid the cold spell, which deprived them of all chance of a supply of insect food, was a moot question. The latter suggestion proved the correct one with reference to one pair of birds the dead bodies of which were found by a shepherd within the entrance to a rabbit-hole. On this long range of downs how many like tragedies may remain undiscovered! This destruction of the earliest arrivals probably tends to make the migration of the species later in succeeding seasons, as it will be the birds of more leisurely habits which become the parents of broods. In the magnificent collection of British birds bequeathed by the late Mr. E. T. Booth to the town of Brighton, a large variety of wheatears is exhibited. Specimens of this fine bird are seen every spring about the middle of April. They are evidently new arrivals on our coasts, but whither they pass on to for the nesting season has yet to be recorded; nor have they been noticed on the return journey during the autumn migration. How plentiful the common wheatear used to be during the autumn flight is related in the "Birds of Sussex," by Mr. W. Borrer, whose valuable collection of birds with that of Mr. T. Monk have now been added to the Booth's Museum. "The most I ever caught in one day," said an old shepherd, "was thirteen dozen; but we thought it a good day if we caught three or four dozen. We sold them to a poulterer in Brighton, who took all we could catch in a season at eight-pence a dozen. From what I have heard from old shepherds it cannot be doubted that they were caught in



much greater numbers a century ago than of late. I have heard them speak of an immense number being taken in one day by a shepherd at East Dean, near Beachy Head. I think they said he took nearly a hundred dozen—so many that they could not thread them on crow quills in the usual way—but he took off his round frock and made a sack of it to put them into, and his wife did the same with her petticoat. This must have happened when there was a great flight." Such a catch must have provided a sumptuous feast to the epicures of adjacent towns.—ERNEST ROBINSON, Saddlecombe, Brighton.

### A BITTERN IN DEVON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—With reference to Lady Theodora Guest's letter in your issue of March 26th, it may interest your readers to know that while out shooting on Beara Farm, Bridestowe, Devon, on January 10th last, I fired through a

thick clump of thorns at what I took to be a wild duck which my dog had just flushed in a small swamp in a corner of a grass field. The bird fell, and on going to pick it up I was horrified to find that it was a bittern, a young bird about three-parts grown. On examining it, however, I was relieved to discover that it had only been struck by a single pellet in one of its wings, and was otherwise quite unhurt. I took it home, placed it in a large walled garden, and fed it on fish, mice, etc., and after a few days it showed marked signs of improvement, and eventually took its departure, probably by climbing up one



of the fruit trees growing against the wall of the garden. It has since been twice observed by a friend of mine, a well-known naturalist, who reports it alive and well. During the time that it remained with me I was able to obtain several interesting photographs and amass a certain amount of information as to the habits of what is now, unfortunately, one of the rarest as well as one of the most interesting of our British birds.—C. H. CALMADY-HAMLYN, New Oxford and Cambridge Club, Pall Mall.

#### WELBECK ABBEY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In your issue of April 21st you illustrate Welbeck Abbey, giving a careful historical account of the building and the works of its past owners. Your admirable illustrations, however, show mostly the building and reconstructive work of the present Duke of Portland, including the chapel and the Titchfield Library from the designs of the late Edmond Sedding and his successor H. Wilson. The fire occurring in 1900 in the Oxford wing necessitated the rebuilding of that portion, and this work was followed by a remodelling and beautifying of the main house, including the building of the new dining-room and its lobby seen in your illustrations. The external gables and battlements (to which your description alludes) were of comparatively recent date, and have been replaced by pediments and a classical treatment of the garden fronts, with loggia, terraces, etc., suited to the character of the house.—ERNEST GEORGE & YEATES.

#### THE RURAL EXODUS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can you tell me in what rural districts in the United Kingdom there is a dearth of farm labour and at the same time ample cottage accommodation? If you are unable to do so yourself, perhaps you would let me know where I can get this information. I occasionally come across genuine cases of involuntary and unmerited unemployment, and I have reason to believe in most instances the men would gladly get "back to the land" if an opportunity occurred.—J. S. PERROTT.

[Perhaps some of our readers will reply to this. —ED.]

#### OTTERS WILD AND TAME.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The interesting article on the otter which appeared in your issue of April 14th reminds me of my experiences in dealing with this animal in various parts of the country. Enclosed will be found a photograph of one I took some years ago. By the merest chance I heard of this one from a friend at a distance, who knew I was always on the look-out for rare subjects for the camera. With my friend I made a special journey to the place where the otter was kept. The owner, who took a great interest in his pet, told me that it was caught while quite young, and that it had been in his possession for several months, and seemed in a fair way to becoming fairly tame and friendly. It was the desire of the owner that the creature should become thoroughly domesticated, but whether his ambition in this matter was fully gratified or not I cannot tell. From what I saw of the taming treatment during my brief visit, there was reason to hope that the caution taken in

approaching the otter, and the consideration shown for the creature's likes and dislikes, would succeed in overcoming the hostility and dread natural to the species. Despite the conveniences provided for captive otters, and the attention paid to them in the matters of food and cleanliness, their lives are bound to be monotonous compared with the free life of such as roam at large in the open country, and rely on their own effort to obtain their necessary food. At large, otters are regarded as notorious poachers. Living on fish, they frequent the seashore and the streams, and make their home in a cairn

of stones, among fallen rocks, or other inaccessible places, in the most unfrequented parts of the country. Unless when bound by family considerations to a particular spot for a time, they are constantly on the move. Those who study their habits in such a district as Arran, for example, can trace their movements from one district to another. When free of encumbrances they will ascend a stream on one side of the island, cross over the high ground, and work their way down the other side. In such a sparsely populated region it would be difficult to keep down the number of otters were it not that they themselves betray their whereabouts by their very depredations. They are expert fishers, and seem to have little difficulty in laying hold of salmon and trout. They seize the finest fish and drag them on to the bank, then devour the flesh in whole or in part as hunger may prompt at the time of capture. Had they the cunning to construct a lair in some recess screened from public gaze, or otherwise contrive to hide away the remains of the feast, their presence in any given locality might escape detection, unless, indeed, otter-hounds should be requisitioned and get upon their trail, or their footprints by chance be observed in the muddy margin of the streams. The tell-tale skeletons of the captured fish that bleach on the banks are the most damaging evidence as to their presence. They unmistakably reveal the whereabouts of the otters, and convict them of an offence that is just tolerable in irresponsible quadrupeds, but which, if perpetrated in preserved waters by an unprivileged human being, would be regarded as a grave violation of the laws that govern the existing order of things.—CHARLES REID.

#### THE PADSTOW HOBBY-HORSE DANCE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The Padstow Hobby-horse Dance is a grotesque custom of very great antiquity, and there is nothing but tradition upon which its origin may be founded. From time immemorial the custom has been celebrated in Padstow on May 1st of each year. At 10 a.m. the hobby-horse makes its appearance with singing and dancing, to the great delight of its followers of both sexes. The man who figures as the hobby-horse is dressed in a savage-looking mask, resembling a fantastic horse with flowing plume and tail; an enormous hoop encircles the waist, supporting a tarpaulin drapery which reaches to the ground, and he is led by a dancing masked guide and attendants with musical instruments, the most prominent of which is a drum. So he goes about the town accompanied by a vast crowd of maids in white dresses decorated with flowers, singing May songs, and merry men firing powder shots from pistols. These



old May games were at one time universal throughout the British Isles, but appear to have gradually died out; Padstow is probably the only place where this quaint May Day custom is carried on. Sir Walter Scott refers to it in "The Abbot," where he says: "One fellow with a horse-head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, ambled, carolled, pranced, and plunged as he performed the celebrated part of the Hobby-horse." The custom is absurdly grotesque, but is an interesting remnant of the merry Elizabethan days.—A. B.